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# Our Child Best Chance

by

DANENHOWER WILSON

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# GIVING YOUR CHILD THE BEST CHANCE

BY  
RUTH DANENHOWER WILSON

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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Acknowledgment is made to Mr. S. S. McClure for his kind permission to reprint in this book four articles which were published in McClure's Magazine.



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GIVING YOUR CHILD THE  
BEST CHANCE



# Giving Your Child the Best Chance

## CHAPTER I

### THE PARENTS' OPPORTUNITY TODAY

**T**HE scourges of motherhood and childhood that pursued the older generations were hideously hidden things of physical infection.

The mother of today no longer draws back in silent fear of those varied specters that followed in the shadows of the stork's wings during her grandmother's day. If she considers them at all it is with that condescension which she reserves for all old wives' tales, or she wonders a little at what she considers the gross ignorance of a generation that unsuspectingly allowed death to ride in on the unsterile instruments of the kindly little black bag, that permitted thousands of new eyes to be blinded to the light of their mothers' faces for the want of a drop or two of nitrate of silver.



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For older generations, the path of the infant from birth to childhood lay through the jungle of an infected land.

“How vastly stupid they must have been,” I heard a young mother say not long ago. “Fancy my grandmother’s country doctor — and oh, how she adored him — presenting himself at the door of a modern maternity ward!” Her hands went up in amused horror. “His instruments washed, if cleansed at all, as one might rinse the supper dishes.”

So always through the hindsight of the new generation does the foresight of the older generation appear incredibly blinded. This situation is not new. It will probably continue so long as one generation follows another. Fifty years hence this complacent new mother will sit in the grandmother’s chair and quite — oh yes, quite by chance overhear *her* granddaughter applying those same epithets of stupidity to her and her generation.

If I were to mention this probability to this same delightful mother now she would dismiss me with a brief lift of an amused eyebrow. “Look at my children,” she would probably demand. “Look at those plump bodies, those red

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cheeks, those clear eyes. Note the vitality in their games, look at their teeth, their hair. Put a stethoscope to their little hearts, their lungs. How are you going to improve on that? "

And my quick answer would be, "I do not see how any generation could do much better—with their bodies."

For to me there is no more amazing thing in all science than the contribution of this early twentieth century to the breeding and rearing of the physical child. No, that future grandmother's scorn cannot point here. The children that I see all about me who are brought up under the new régime are really astounding little creatures. Undoubtedly we are beginning to understand their little bodies and the hideously subtle things that prey on them. The explorers in this field of child study have worked well into their territory, leaving us plainly marked trails and sign-posts that point with unerring fingers. This we may confidently affirm is beginning to be the Known Land.

What then of the Unknown Land? you demand. And my answer can better be demonstrated than explained.

If you will turn over the pages of serious

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magazines and reviews, if you will attend the mothers' meetings, the women's clubs, the conclaves of school boards, the profound considerations of sociologists, the hurried whisper and query of one mother to another, of one father to another, you will find one subject running through as a common theme.

What are we going to do with this healthy young animal that we have made? We have given him the best body that any generation of men has produced. And just when we have time to stop for breath and congratulate ourselves we are brought up with a sudden rein by the query, Well, what of it? What are you going to do now? His body is better, but how about his mind, his intellect, his sympathies, his mental courage, his spirit, his regard for truth and beauty, his attitude toward work? How about infections of the intellect and spirit of the child? Are there such things as mental and spiritual infections that can be passed on from mother to child? Are there other infections of the child's character which come to it directly unless we guard against them?

The science of the day answers with blunt direction. Yes.

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There are points of infection along the channels that feed the child's mind and character as poisonous as any and a thousand times more terrible than any that ever polluted the physical avenues of nutrition. The average mother of today understands these mental and spiritual enemies, these psychological foes lurking to prey upon her child, as little as her grandmother understood the physical danger of germs.

I do not mean to imply with a sensational flourish that the present generation of children is possessed by spiritual decadence, or mental atrophy. Such is obviously not the case. Despite the calamity howlers it cannot be demonstrated that they lie or cheat or otherwise abuse their moral and ethical codes more than have other generations. Perhaps the new physical vitality we have given them may make their transgressions more apparent. I do not know.

What I do mean to say is that the psychologists in their new study of the child are beginning to question the normality of many of these mental and ethical infections. They are beginning to question whether the devastating trait of selfishness, for instance, ought to be

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taken as a common burden of mankind or whether it is a diseased symptom of an early childhood infection. They are beginning to wonder if such things as untruthfulness, cowardice and lack of self-control do not bear the same relation to the child's mental health as do infected teeth and tonsils to his physical health. They are asking whether that antagonism between child and parents which grows into the age-old struggle between the new and the old generation does not have its beginning in failure of the parents to understand the child at some vital period of his development.

The psychologists' research has practically just begun in spite of certain absurd claims of certain schools. Most of the great scientists in this field admit the fact. As one of them said to me not long ago: We are in those early stages of suspicion in which we are challenging every quarter, no matter how reputable its former character. We have a strong feeling that ultimately we shall uncover hidden pus centers in childhood which will clear up many of the mental and spiritual scourges of adult life. We have done enough already to warrant this faith.

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It seems a rather astounding announcement! You ask: Do you mean to imply that we can ever hope to breed and rear a generation of children that shall be free from moral and mental disease?

And my answer to that is, I do not know. Probably not, any more than physicians can entirely eliminate physical pests. What I do mean to suggest is that during the next few generations we are going to take some astounding steps forward in understanding and clearing up some of these points of mental and moral infections. There is a school of psychologists today which denies the truth of the old proverb, "A sound mind in a sound body." They assert that in many cases bodies are sound and minds and nerves unsound, and that the sources of these psychic infections go back to early childhood. Some of the things they have discovered stagger our complacent acceptance of mere physical health.

My purpose in this book is to follow along after the psychologists and to present their fragmentary field notes for what they are worth. They are brought to your attention as rather disconnected, tentative jottings fresh



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
from the men who are working in their living laboratories. They are gathered wherever I have been able to find fragments from different fields. In Vienna there are Professor Sigmund Freud with his startling methods of psychoanalysis, and Dr. Alfred Adler with his larger views; in Zurich there is Dr. Jung and his school; and other doctors and psychologists are scattered here and there in France, England, Italy, and Germany. In this country we have orthodox psychologists of the three rival schools, Introspectionists, Behaviorists and Genetisists, neurologists of various schools, including those who, like Dr. A. A. Brill, follow Freud's methods of psychoanalysis, and those who, like Dr. Frank Tannenbaum, reject Freud's methods and practice their own type of psychoanalysis. Perhaps our own country's greatest contribution to this new study of the child is the work of Dr. G. Stanley Hall and the group of psychologists who have been with him at Clark University. In truth, all over the world doctors, sociologists, biologists, and psychologists are working in this great new field of child study.

However much these investigators disagree



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on various points, there is one great fundamental discovery on which they are in general agreement. The parents' treatment of their children during the early years in the home is the most important factor in developing sane, well-balanced grown people, free from mental and moral abnormalities. 

Just as the most intelligent parents of the last generation had the first aid from scientists in the care and feeding of their children, so the most intelligent parents today have the first opportunity for getting scientific advice as to their children's moral and mental development, advice that will be common knowledge in another generation. The most intelligent parents today realize that to give their children the best chance for perfect development in every way, they must eagerly follow the scientists who are beginning to point the way to the proper upbringing for moral, mental and emotional well-being.

## CHAPTER II

### THE EMOTIONALLY-NEGLECTED CHILD

IT IS the fashion for grown-ups to consider childhood as a happy, care-free period. Such it certainly is so far as most of the responsibilities usual to grown-ups are concerned. But when we look into the emotional life we find childhood a time of strain and stress. The research of modern psychologists and the case histories of psychoanalysts combine to show that "demons haunt the life of the typical child in the typical environment." These demons are fear and self-depreciation, the two forms of neuroses from which all children suffer in greater or less degree. All who understand the nature of the demons put the task of preventing or exorcising them directly on the parents. It is a work of the utmost importance, for if the demons are not successfully combated during childhood they will inevitably reappear in worse form in later life. Dr. Constance E. Long, an English psychoanalyst and former President of the Association of Registered

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Medical Women, says, "There is rarely a broken-down man or woman who does not trace most of the trouble back to incidences and influences of childhood. Such is the conscious view." When the individual is dealt with analytically, when the unconscious mind that makes up the greater part of the personality is studied, the influence of childhood on later mental stability is shown to be even more profoundly important. As Dr. A. A. Brill has said to me, "There never was a neurotic who didn't have a neurosis in childhood. The seeds of paranoia, dementia praecox and other forms of insanity are sown in the unconsciousness before the victims are seven years old. The recognition and cure of the symptoms in childhood is almost always possible but can come only through the parents. Eighty per cent of the patients who consult doctors show some form of neurosis which dates back to childhood."

Parents rarely recognize symptoms which show that a child is fighting the demons of neurosis and is desperately in need of help. The average father and mother merely see that their child has frequent "tantrums," unaccountable fits of stubbornness, or is habitually

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ill-tempered, intractable or unambitious. In many cases some physical illness or defect may be a contributing cause, but in many others there is nothing physically wrong, and the manifestations commonly called "naughty" are caused solely by disturbances in the child's emotional development. Many a child who is intractable in school is unjustly judged. In most cases the parent and not the child is at fault.

The task of the parents is to keep the child's emotional development as normal and unperturbed as possible. Dr. Brill even goes so far as to say that if this is done successfully for the first eight years so that no nervous symptoms have become pronounced up to that time, the child will go through life a well-balanced individual, without nervous break-downs or more serious mental disturbances of a functional nature. This encouraging supposition cannot be scientifically accepted for some years to come, since psychoanalysis has been practiced for barely twenty-five years, and so the children whose first eight years have been observed by psychoanalysts to be emotionally normal have not yet completed the span of their

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lives. But the theory, in so far as it has been tested, warrants the interest that it has aroused.

The typical child in the typical environment who shows nervous symptoms before the age of eight may seem to outgrow them and remain perfectly balanced for years. Yet if he is put under severe emotional strain his symptoms will reappear later in worse form. The neurosis of early childhood frequently remains inactive in the unconsciousness for a long time, much as undeveloped primitive cells remain in the body in the form of cysts, inactive and harmless for years before springing into dangerous activity. Puberty is the time at which the demon of early neurosis usually makes its first reappearance.

To understand the neuroses of the typical child in the typical environment we must first have some idea both of the meaning of infancy and the meaning of mental health.

It is a commonplace that the infancy of animals is much shorter than that of man. The new-hatched chick can run about and pick up corn. The new-hatched fish can swim around and find its own food. From the beginning

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these lower animals are suited to the environment in which they are to live. From the very first they can perform the two functions most important to their chances of life. The higher we go in the animal scale, the more prolonged we find the infancy of the young. The protection of the parents is needed longer and longer to develop the greater powers the higher animals will possess when they are fully grown.

Of all new-born creatures the baby is the most helpless, yet when he is grown to manhood his powers will be greater than those of any other species and will fit him to live in the most complicated environment. Moreover, he will be able to mould his environment to his needs more than is within the power of any other species. So his infancy, his care by his parents, is necessarily prolonged to enable him to adjust his powers to his future surroundings. Such in brief outline is the meaning of infancy as formulated by John Fiske and generally accepted today.

The research of the new psychology adds to the importance of Fiske's understanding of the meaning of infancy. For the new psychology understands sanity to be a perfect adapta-

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tion *emotionally* to environment. Those people who are well-adapted to their surroundings, who can adjust themselves to all life's unavoidable changes are sane. Those who are maladjusted to their surroundings, and who, instead of moulding their environment to suit their needs, draw away from realities to live in phantasies, are in a greater or less degree insane. As Dr. Brill says, "We may consider the individual insane whose actions and general behaviour are foreign to his environment." Usually, instead of acting in a way suitable to his surroundings, the insane person goes back to infantile or primitive reactions, taking up his old childish neurosis in worse form.

So the development of sane, well-balanced grown people all comes back to the parents' responsibility for fitting their children to a suitable emotional environment. Dr. Brill puts the problem this way: "The child's neurosis of fear and self-depreciation come from maladjustment to environment. Cure means one of two things, either changes in the environment if it is unsuitable for proper emotional development, or changes in the child's attitude to the environment. Either course needs the



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cooperation of the parents. Neglect is fatal."

To expound the whole theory of the normal emotional adaptation which each child should, ideally speaking, go through in the course of growing up, is outside the scope of this book. I can merely point out the nature of the worst demons that haunt the way, speak of some of the lacks in the emotional environment that cause their appearance, and suggest some of the means now known for preventing and exorcising them.

To understand childish neurotic fear we must clearly distinguish it from real fear that is a biological need of all animals, young and old, the fear that is the instinctive recognition of danger and the fleeing from it. The baby chick is well endowed by nature with this real and useful fear. For example, when a shadow falls suddenly upon a chick of a few days old it will run to its mother as if for protection from a hawk.

The baby and young child has very little of this real and useful fear. Freud says, "It would be most desirable to have a larger heritage of such life-preservative instincts. . . . In reality the child at first overestimates his

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powers and behaves fearlessly because he does not recognize dangers. He will run to the water's edge, mount the window sill, play with fire or with sharp instruments, in short, he will do everything that would harm him and alarm his guardians. The awakening of real fear is the result of education, since we may not permit him to pass through the instructive experience himself."

While educating a child in real and useful fear, the parent has to combat neurotic fear, which does not come from the instinct of self-preservation and is useless because it is a fear of people or situations that are not really harmful.

Freud explains the way in which the child's neurotic fear is caused by maladjusted emotional energy. A little child frequently fears a stranger, yet does not really expect the unknown person is going to harm him. The average child has certainly had no experience of being hurt by strangers. Freud thinks the child fears the stranger because his emotions are adjusted only to a dear, beloved person, his mother. His disappointment at having to adjust himself to someone else, his longing to

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be only with the person he is used to, is transferred into fear. The first situations a child fears are darkness and solitude. Common to both is the absence of the dear nurse, the mother. Freud does not hold the popular view that there are inherited racial fears. He holds that the child's longing for his mother expresses itself in fear.

An example of the way maladjusted emotions cause fear is the case of a boy of eleven who was brought to Dr. Brill because he was afraid to be alone, and especially to sleep alone. He frequently had frightful nightmares. By analyzing the contents of the nightmares Dr. Brill found that the boy always wanted his mother with him. If this attitude had been allowed to continue it might have developed into various abnormalities. Under the doctor's guidance the mother gradually succeeded in changing the boy's attitude towards her, in making him feel that while it was not unnatural for him to depend on her presence when he was a little fellow, now that he was older he must have pride in being more self-reliant. The child gradually learned how to express his love for his mother in more suitable ways than in fear.

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at being separated from her. A simple cure.

The other demon of childhood is the neurosis of self-depreciation. It may be understood as a fear of self, and like other neurotic fears is caused by maladjusted emotions.

The demons of neurotic fear and self-depreciation can assume all sorts of shapes through the mechanism of the child's unconscious mind. The Freudian view is that all hysterical people suffer from some past experience. Every hysterical symptom represents some emotional disturbance that has taken place in the past. In a child the past disturbance frequently manifests itself in hysterical fears. The reaction of lying is another very common manifestation of fearfulness. The bully is really ridden by fears. Dr. Constance Long says aggressiveness is an over-compensation for fear, and pugnacity a desire to strike first for fear of being struck. Overweening desire to show off is frequently just as much a result of fear as is excessive bashfulness.

Ignorance of the future, unsatisfied curiosity, is also sometimes turned into neurotic fear. The child is in complete ignorance of what his or her place and function in the world is to be.

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Vague, terrifying hints awake a fearful curiosity, particularly about matters relating to sex. If this natural curiosity is unduly repressed the child will weave all sorts of phantasies and may become the prey of neurotic fears. Dr. Jung tells of a girl of four, the even tenor of whose life was broken by the birth of a brother. To her natural question: Where does the baby come from? she received no answers. Her pent-up emotions transferred themselves into frequent night-terrors and a neurotic fear of the Messina earthquake which was much talked about at the time. She asked endless questions about it. When at last her parents gave her enough information about the origin of the baby to provide a working solution to her mind, her curiosity and fear about the earthquake disappeared.

The demon of self-depreciation can assume almost as many shapes as its twin brother, fear. It frequently appears in children who take as their ideals of conduct the standards of grown people and consequently feel intense humiliation at failure to reach those ideals. A child who has found it difficult to accomplish his school-tasks as well as his teacher expects, may

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give up making his best efforts and become listlessly indifferent through an unconscious conviction that he couldn't possibly succeed. Other children may show their self-depreciation by being unsocial, especially unwilling to play with children of their own age. Some experience of failure has made them feel unequal to the task of adjusting themselves to the older age through which they are passing. Such children will frequently get on very well with younger children, though they are unhappy with their equals in age.

Sometimes self-depreciation will prevent a child from playing with any children for a while, even with those much younger. Dr. Constance Long gives an example of such a case: "A small boy had been frightened by his parents into denying he had taken tooth-powder from his mother's room and from the guest room to put on his hair. He was given a severe whipping and a confession was demanded. By this time he was still further depreciated, for the whipping had added humiliation to fear. Now he *could not* confess and got a second whipping. He was given a third chance by his righteous and nonplussed parents. This time



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he made a compromise and confessed to using the tooth-powder in his mother's room. At that point the confession stopped. By this time the parents, feeling themselves to be on the wrong track, jumped at the partial confession to let the culprit off, and the matter was never referred to again. But it did not end here for the child. A day or two later he went to a picnic. His little soul was full of self-depreciation. He simply could not join in the play of the other children, but clung to the neighborhood of adults. They doubtless thought him a sickly child. The other children thought him a mug.

“To this day—a half century later—he remembers the poignant humiliation that followed this and other whippings; not that the whippings hurt, for they rarely drew a tear. The shrinking from his little companions was due to a sense of shame—‘suppose they knew’—as for all he could tell they might, he would lose their good opinion. It seemed better not to tempt a fall, so he kept out of their way. It is clear that this child was very sensitive to the good opinion of others. What he needed to learn was self-respect. There was no harm



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in his play with the powder, but he intuitively felt the criticism of the adults. He lied because he judged himself according to his understanding of their adult standards.”

Just as lies are often told to inflate the personality because it is felt to be inadequate, so stealing is sometimes caused by a sense of inferiority or self-depreciation.

Dr. Long gives the following example: “A little boy of seven was brought to me because he had taken to thieving; he also suffered from night-terrors and nervous tics. He had attacks of almost frenzied behaviour. For some months past at intervals he had taken money from his mother’s purse, which he subsequently spent on presents of fruits and flowers to take to his teachers.

“One of his secret troubles was that his younger sister was in his class, and as she was much cleverer than he, he was always being surpassed by her. This disappointed his mother, who hoped for learning in her son to keep up the high intellectual traditions of a distinguished family. The little boy felt depreciated, and to reinstate himself in his own opinion and increase his importance, he gave

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his teachers fine presents bought with stolen money, and in this primitive way attempted to enhance his personality.

“In such a case the child does not know why he steals. He is completely puzzled when you say to him: ‘As you stole the money, why did you not eat the grapes you bought with it? Why did you give them to Miss X?’ In a vague way he feels he has done far less wrong than if he ate them himself, and yet he is confronted with the fact of the theft. Without knowing it he has been following the irrational way of the unconscious mind. He is under a compulsion to overcome his feelings of inferiority.”

Another not infrequent manifestation of a sense of inferiority, of self-depreciation, is the foster child phantasy. Professor Conklin of the University of Oregon made a study of this problem based on the answers to nine hundred and four questionnaires given to students in college and high schools. Twenty-eight per cent could immediately recall that at some time in their childhood they had imagined themselves to be adopted children. Professor Conklin feels that to this percentage should be added some forgotten or suppressed cases. Sixty-

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one percent of the cases occurred during the years from eight to twelve. The causes the students themselves gave for this phantasy were feelings of parental neglect or lack of affection, prolonged absence from parents, observation of friction between parents, lack of companionship, or the absence of mental or physical resemblance to parents. Dissatisfaction with home conditions was also an important factor. Any or all of these conditions, added to another that I will take up presently, brought about a sense of self-depreciation in the child. Sometimes in his phantasy of being adopted the child would imagine himself to be a poor foundling. In other cases as a compensation for the feeling of inferiority the child had fancies of greatness, of being a prince or princess in disguise. In forty-nine percent of the cases studied the phantasy lasted more than a year. In one case it lasted fifteen years. Almost all of the nine hundred and four answers gave one cause in addition to those already enumerated, that is, the influence of fairy tales or of romantic literature. Psychoanalysts deplore this tendency of fairy tales and primitive folk lore to fix in children the habit of fulfill-

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ing their desires through phantasies instead of through effort. Dr. Brill says that many grown-ups, "having been imbued in childhood with the omnipotence of the fairy-book heroes, wish to be like them and later refuse or find it difficult to become plain citizens struggling for existence. Such individuals are constantly wishing for the unattainable that could only be gotten through the charms of fairy-land."

Such are some of the forms that the twin demons of self-depreciation and fear can assume.

If we accept Freud's belief that maladjusted emotional energy is always the cause of these childish neuroses we should scrutinize closely every phase of the child's emotional life. As Dr. Brill says, "It is a fundamental truth that the human being must have someone to love *all the time.*" In cases such as the boy of eleven who always wanted his mother a change needed to be made in the child's own attitude. In the majority of cases changes are desirable, not in the attitude of the child but in that of his parents or his brothers and sisters. In the love between child and parents and between different children of the same family there are sev-

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eral little recognized dangers. As Dr. Long says, "No human relation that is valuable can escape having its dangerous as well as its beneficent side." The truth of this statement is well-recognized in the marriage relationship, but is less understood in other phases of family life.

In many homes a child's emotional life is disturbed because the love given him by his parents is misdirected. Frequently it is based on a misunderstanding of the child's emotional type. It is well for parents to have some knowledge of the two contrasting emotional classes so that they can better understand their children's emotional tendencies. Jung classifies people as introverts and extraverts. The introvert is similar to William James' classification of tender-minded, the extravert to his tough-minded. A child's type depends upon whether the main current of his emotional interest is directed outward towards objects and people or inward towards his own thoughts. As Dr. Long, who was a pupil of Jung's, puts it, "the extravert tends to get lost in materialism. The external world, persons, things and causes are very attractive to him. The life of

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thought and cultivation of the inward eye is of less moment. The extravert is enthusiastic, outgoing, adventurous in deeds. He believes in himself and is not hindered by self-criticism." An example of a statesman of the extravert type is Theodore Roosevelt.

The tender-minded or introverted type adapts itself with more difficulty to his surroundings, preferring his own inner world of thought and his own ideas to anything that is thrust upon him from without. He is very sensitive, self-conscious, and personal in his way of feeling. He is reserved and difficult of access. His critical faculty is highly developed so that he may distrust himself. His turn of mind is speculative and independent of the outer world. Most great philosophers, poets, musicians and artists belong to this type. An example of a statesman of the introverted type is Woodrow Wilson.

Of course everyone has mixed qualities. The main tendency is indicated by the name introvert or extravert, but is combined with many qualities of the opposite type. The aim of the parent should be to develop the strength of each type. A parent of one type naturally has,



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difficulty in understanding a child of the opposite type, and frequently makes the cruel mistake of trying to change the child's tendency. To do so works against the main stream of the emotional energies and causes the demons of fear and self-depreciation to appear. Many a nervous break-down is brought on by the mistaken attempt of parents to change the type of the child. For instance, parents may blame a child of the introverted type, because he does not make friends easily, and makes no effort to be popular. He probably is satisfied with one or two friends and employs most of his emotional energy in communing with his own spirit.

Another way in which the emotional life in the home may be made unsuitable is through unstable treatment by the parents. Dr. Brill tells of a nervous child whose mother after quarreling with the father, would lavish attention on the child to arouse her husband's jealousy. Could any child be expected to adjust himself to such an unstable emotional environment? This is an extreme case, yet its counterpart in less degree is found in many a home where a child is treated with fondness or indifference according to the parents' whim.

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Other cases of emotional instability are caused by mistaken relationships between two or more children in a family. The younger child is apt to be made too submissive to the older one and consequently has difficulty in adapting himself to situations outside the home that require qualities of leadership. The older child in a family is apt to have qualities of dominance over-emphasized and so has difficulty in adjusting his feelings to playmates or schoolmates who will not constantly be submissive to him. Some parents delegate to the older children in a family too much authority over the younger ones. Another difficulty of the oldest child in a family is that he sometimes has insufficient stimulus through being kept too much with the younger children. A case of this kind was a girl of thirteen who had been doing well at school, yet during the summer vacation developed an extreme self-depreciation, an unhappiness and indifference to her surroundings that resembled the symptoms of dementia praecox. This dread form of insanity claims a large percentage of its victims among children in the teens. The girl's mother consulted a psychoanalyst. In one interview with the child,



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he ascertained she was mentally and emotionally rather advanced for her years. From the mother he learned that the girl was kept constantly with sisters three and five years younger than herself. She roomed with them and had her meals in the nursery with them. All toys and books were shared in common. It was apparent to the doctor that the thirteen-year-old girl needed an environment different from that of the younger sisters. While she had had school work suitable for her mental development and schoolmates of her own age she had shown no signs of neurosis. The doctor instructed her mother to give the girl a room of her own with furniture such as grown people use, to get her books suitable for her age, to let her eat with grown-ups and to make an effort to have her see children of her own age or older. All signs of neurosis promptly disappeared under the new régime.

More companionship of sympathetic grown-ups is considered by many psychologists to be the chief emotional need of many children today. While many a child is spoiled by being kept too constantly with grown people, countless others are harmed by having too little

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grown-up intimacy. We pity children who are insufficiently looked after through being left to the casual care of a neighbor or older sister while their fathers and mothers have to be away at work all day. But what of the child whose parents are so busy playing that they turn him over wholly to the care of a nurse or governess? His physical wants may be well attended to but his emotional needs are rarely understood. A well-known psychoanalyst in New York told me of a girl of nine who suddenly became obsessed with fits of obstinacy. She positively refused to go down to her meals, and spent a great deal of time crying in her room. Her parents had an examination by physicians who pronounced her in good physical condition. The parents began to fear insanity which they regarded as an affliction for which they had no responsibility. As a last resort they took her to the aforementioned psychoanalyst, declaring there had never been any insanity in their families before. To their surprise the doctor diagnosed the case with no mysterious use of association tests or analysis of the child's dreams. He had one interview with the little girl as she played in the park,

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meeting her as if he were a friend of the family, not a physician, for he wisely feels it is bad for a child to know she needs advice for mental trouble. In one interview he ascertained that the little girl was of normal intelligence. Then he directed his attention to her emotional surroundings in her home. He sent one of his trained observers to her as a visiting governess. The latter reported that the child rarely saw her parents. Her father "would not be bothered to have her at the breakfast table with him," and went to his office without seeing her, returning after she had gone to bed. Saturday afternoon and all day Sunday he was in the country playing golf. The mother always had her breakfast in her room and did not get up till after the child was occupied by lessons with the nursery governess. The rest of the mother's day was filled with a round of pleasure. Only occasionally when she was at home for luncheon without guests the child had a meal with her. Otherwise the little girl ate breakfast, luncheon and an early supper alone with the nursery governess. If the child had been so fortunate as to have the companionship of a wise and loving governess she might have developed

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very well without missing her foolish parents overmuch. But the fact was that for one reason or another there had been a frequent change of governesses. The little girl had never been with one long enough to know and love her intimately. Consequently the child was bewildered and unhappy, wholly at a loss for sympathetic grown-up guidance or for anyone on whom to expend her pent-up emotions. A grown person who has no one to love may learn to direct his emotional energy towards some animal or inanimate object, or, better still, may sublimate it into some useful activity. Such an adjustment is at best only an artificial substitute for loving some human being. For a child to make such a substitution successfully is impossible.

Some children are deprived of sufficient grown-up intimacies by being kept constantly at an early age in boarding-schools and summer camps with very little chance to know their own parents. At a well-known boarding-school for boys there is a fine-looking gray-haired woman who is house-mother for the younger boys, over a hundred in number, from ten to thirteen years old. Work as she would no one woman could

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possibly have time to meet the needs of one hundred boys for sympathetic grown-up companionship, for guidance in working out an emotionally stable attitude towards all the problems of their lives. Yet if any one of those boys became nervous or intractable his parents probably blamed him or the school rather than themselves. Dr. Alfred A. Adler says that in the last analysis a child's tractability depends upon his powers of affection. How much chance has each of those hundred boys of knowing and loving the busy house-mother or the masters who teach them? What each needs is a "boy-mother" and a companionable father. Under the English custom boys are sent away to school even younger than is usual in this country. This much can be said for the English system: their schools give long vacations at Christmas and Easter so the boys keep in touch with their parents. During the two or three weeks of holidays usual here the boys hardly have time to become reacquainted at home before they go back to school again. So for nine months of the year they are without grown-up intimacies.

An extremely monotonous routine is unsuitable for proper emotional development. Both

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in the home and in schools a too rigid routine may be insisted upon more for the benefit of the grown-ups than of the children. The child's emotions are naturally active and need to be given vent. I do not mean that children should be given exciting diversions or entertainments at late hours. But there should be occasional special treats when the ordinary routine is expanded. The joy of looking forward to some excursion and of living it over in memory afterwards gives wholesome emotional outlet for a long time. Consider the vivid interests awakened and given vent by producing a simple, suitable play.

In addition to the emotional outlet of occasional breaks in the routine of living, each child needs some form of creative, emotional self-expression. In one child it may take the form of making things with tools, or with painting; in another it may be rhythmic self-expression in dancing. Fortunately this need of childhood for self-expression is becoming better and better understood. An example of this understanding is the work of Mr. David Mannes in the Music School Settlement of New York City. Mr. Mannes says the settlement is,



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not meant for the child who has unusual musical gifts, who seems fit to develop into an artist. For such a child suitable, free instruction can always be found elsewhere. The aim of the settlement is to teach music as a means of self-expression to children who have no outstanding talent, and who in their cramped home lives have few avenues of emotional outlet.

It is unnecessary to dwell long on the constructive means the new psychology offers for the prevention or cure of the demons of neurosis. The examples given of maladjustments in emotional development carry with them suggestions of prevention and cure. Psychoanalysts are wont to say that the future mental health of the race depends upon parents' understanding of emotional prophylaxis and hygiene. When suitable emotional environment is provided for children a generation of grown people will develop that will be largely free from the nervous ills that afflict eighty per cent of the patients who consult doctors today. We may modify Freud's view that maladjusted emotions cause all neuroses, through believing with Jung that each individual inherits some degree of the primitive neurotic fear of the race. Even

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so a stable emotional hygiene is all the more essential, so that inherited neurotic fears may be the more easily outgrown.

Prerequisites for the prevention of the demons of fear and neurosis are plenty of wholesome emotional outlets, a balanced ration of loving adult intimacy and companionship with other children, and sane instruction in matters relating to sex. The child's questions should be answered as frankly as they come, no matter at how early an age. Unasked for information should not be forced upon a child nor should natural curiosity be repressed. Then as Dr. Long says, "We must note what the child does and how he interprets our words. Where we find fear associated with the subject we should seek to remove it, but we need not trouble if the child's ideas are inexact as long as they serve him as a working hypothesis which allows him to make progress in his human relations. We should not laugh at his mistakes or his phantasies, but try to get into direct contact with his emotional processes, and keep a critical eye upon our own accustomed formulas of sex. We want to keep a path open between us and the child."

There is one other great help a child needs



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for the prevention of the twin demons of neurosis. That help is religion, perhaps the greatest aid of all.

The young child has the same innate need for religion that the savage has. Psychologists understand the origin of religion in the primitive mind as an instinctive need for the exorcising of neurotic fears and superstitions. Just as much it is the need of the child mind. Dr. Henry Dwight Chapin emphasizes this need of children, and wisely says: "The elements of religion necessary for a little child are very simple. Dogmas should not be insisted upon, lest in later stages of mental development the child rejects not only the outgrown dogmas but the basic truths behind them." The religious truths that a child needs to be taught early are the fundamental ones of a religion of love. Yet merely to teach a child to believe theoretically in a religion of love is very little help to him, unless in his daily home life he sees examples of its practice.

We know the child to be as self-seeking as a savage, yet unlike the savage he is capable of being taught in comparatively few years to take a place in civilization where the law of the

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greatest good of the greatest number is slowly and painfully replacing the savage law of gratification of self alone. The new psychology understands this struggle as a conflict between the unconscious impulses that are absolutely egoistic, and the restraints consciously imposed by civilized ideals. As soon as the child outgrows infancy he is confronted with this choice between instinct and ideal; he is in the midst of an emotional conflict that will endure in some form or other all his life. To meet this struggle successfully he needs the incalculable help of a religion based on love. He needs the example of a life of love. Only through the help of this religious spirit can he ever become truly balanced emotionally.

Indeed there is great ground for the belief that it is only by producing a new generation of men and women imbued with a religious spirit of love that our present civilization can survive. Otherwise it will inevitably destroy itself through the savage spirit of self-seeking expressed in the modern science of warfare.

Is it small wonder that we feel the new psychology, while giving parents invaluable help, constantly emphasizes the magnitude of their

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responsibilities? It shows parenthood to be the most difficult as well as the most important of vocations. It demands a re-education to their children's needs that frequently involves an entire reformation of the parents' own philosophy of life and of their mode of living.

## CHAPTER III

### THE SPOILED CHILD

WHILE many children suffer from too little companionship with grown people, many others are harmed by too much attention from their elders. This latter type is the spoiled child. That is a good old English idiom that every one understands. A child can be spoiled by favoritism or by isolation or by such over-petting as is commonly supposed to be the usual lot of only children; or children may be spoiled by the mere weakening of discipline everywhere, while at the same time the importance of childhood is emphasized in a wrong way. It has long been suspected that many perplexing infections of character such as abnormal sex manifestations, lack of competitive stamina, and the various degrees of ethical blindness in grown people might be traceable to the peculiar conditions that surrounded them in childhood. It was found that these abnormal adults had frequently been over-petted children whose parents had had no

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idea of fitting them for future responsibilities.

Dr. Neter of Munich, Dr. Friedjung of Vienna, Professor Bohannon of Clark University and the Freudian school of psychoanalysts have been opening up an extensive experimentation in this field, gathering most of their data about only children, as it was found that the spoiled child was oftenest an only child, though the same kind of spoil often blights the youngest child, or one who for some other reason becomes the favorite.

These investigators are not trying to prove anything, they are not engaging in propaganda of any kind. They are not aiming to show with Roosevelt that families of but one child mean race suicide, nor are they aligning themselves with the advocates of birth control who hold that limitation of families means quality rather than quantity in the race. They are simply seeking the facts as to what kind of grown-ups spoiled children make, and what factors in their childhood were effective in maturity.

Dr. A. A. Brill, the neurologist of the Freudian school, and Professor of Psychology at New York University, found that among the adult patients he treated for nervous disorders

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a very large percentage were only or favorite children. He made specific observations of four hundred of these patients who had been spoiled children, one hundred and seventy-two men and two hundred and twenty-eight women. The least serious cases were merely strangely unsocial jealous beings. One only son of nineteen had not a single friend. He wished to associate exclusively with older persons and could not adapt himself to the society of young people because, as he said, they "bored" him.

The most serious cases among the four hundred patients showed far greater deviations from the normal. About eighteen per cent suffered from dementia praecox, an incurable form of insanity, and thirty-six per cent showed sexual abnormalities. The rest suffered from various forms of the psycho-neuroses, that is, from nervous disorders which have their origin in psychic conditions, in contrast to the true neuroses which are caused by bodily ills.

Dr. Brill cautions us that no statistical conclusions should be drawn from these four hundred cases, as they came to him or were sent to him for treatment for the psycho-neuroses or some of the other maladies named above.

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Also some of the only children were undoubtedly burdened by poor heredity, the disease of one of the parents perhaps making them only children and being passed on to them. After a detailed study of these four hundred cases Dr. Brill concludes, however, that they do "show the marked prevalence of only or favorite children in these classes of nervous patients." He further concludes that spoiled children become confirmed egotists and are poor competitors in the struggle for existence.

Yet as children these four hundred patients undoubtedly had the most of everything since babyhood, the most care, the most affection, the most of all that money could buy compared to other children of the same class who shared impartially with brothers and sisters. One would naturally suppose that when these little possessors of extra advantages reached man's estate they would be the best equipped for life. What is the reason that in actual fact they end up in the neurologist's office? To find the source of the unfortunate characteristics of the adult spoiled child we must follow certain studies of childhood. These were made on only children as the most practical method for seg-



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regating numbers of children, a large proportion of whom would be spoiled children.

Dr. Friedjung of Vienna studied one hundred only children, forty-five boys and fifty-five girls from one to eleven years old. He found that the majority of them had no appetite. They had been gorged with too much food. Of course the result was poor digestion, pallid cheeks and flabby muscles. Professor Bohannon's investigation of only children in schools in this country found them far below the average in health and vitality.

But what has overfeeding and its physical results to do with the only child's nervous abnormalities as an adult? Just this. We have seen how the only child gets the most of everything, the most food, the most attention, the most love. The most food proves to be too much food with bad physical effects. That is the least of the bad results from the most of everything the only child is always getting. "The most" really means "too much" in every direction. Too much attention from grown-ups has unfortunate results to a child's nerves, egotism, and powers of competition; worst of all, the gorging with too much parental



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love means, according to the Freudian school, the worst possible result to normal development in later life.

How does an excess of association with grown-ups make for nervousness?

Professor Bohannon stresses the danger of overburdening the child with grown-up responsibilities and confidences, "making the defenseless little being father confessor for all sorts of temporal and spiritual woes." He gives an instance of a child whose mother made him her constant companion, discussing everything with him, even to her religious doubts and scruples. Another, and an only child, announced at the age of ten that he was an agnostic and a communist. These were not just parrot phrases with him. He had a very fair understanding of what he meant by the terms, for he had discussed them with his parents when most boys of his age were talking about the football championship. An only daughter at the age of nine was all wrought up over the increasingly high cost of living. She would gravely tell how much more the staple commodities cost than they did the year before. If sugar or butter went up a cent more she was as genuinely worried

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as any careful housekeeper with only a small margin of means.

That nervousness is apparent in the spoiled child at an early age is shown by the study of one hundred only children made by Dr. Friedjung. Only thirteen were normally nervous though thirty-three were physically normal. Eighty-seven were more or less neuropathic. Eighteen of these eighty-seven were very neurotic.

One of the main characteristics of these eighty-seven children was exaggerated fears. Normal children frequently fear the same things for a time, the doctor, dark rooms, thunder, animals, and so on. But in these only children such fears were exaggerated so as to be almost obsessing, interfering seriously with their sleep by night and their peace of mind by day. The major cause of such nervous conditions in only children is undoubtedly too much association with the fears, problems and responsibilities of grown-ups.

Precocity, another characteristic of the spoiled child, seems also to be a result of too much association with grown-ups and to be a marked factor in causing egotism and poor

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powers of competition in adult life. Both Dr. Friedjung and Professor Bohannon found precocity a prominent characteristic of the only child. Dr. Friedjung's hundred cases all showed unusual mental development. Even among the eighty-seven who were nervously abnormal seventy-eight were above normal in the development of their minds. One little girl could give her name and address at the age of sixteen months. Professor Bohannon had conducted an investigation of peculiar and exceptional children, and was struck with the number that were described as only children, though he had not inquired on that point. So he investigated the only child separately by sending questionnaires to teachers inquiring all sorts of details about the only children in their classes. A study of the three hundred and eighty-one replies led him to the conclusion that precocity was the most conspicuous trait of the only child in spite of the fact that they entered school later than other children and were less regular in their attendance.

Instead of precocity some of the teachers used the term "mentally old for their years." By it they evidently did not mean that these

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only children had mental powers superior to others, for they also reported that their success in school work was *below* the average. So it seems logical to conclude that the precocity of the only child merely means that he is old for his years because of his constant association with older people.

It is an old superstition that the seventh child in a family is always the one remarkably endowed by nature. Some investigators claim that the fifth or sixth child is the flower of the family. Margaret Sanger points to cases of geniuses who were only children.

Of all the studies that have been made of the matter the most comprehensive, scientific and dispassionate is that of Havelock Ellis, the English sociologist. From dictionaries of biography he took one thousand and thirty British geniuses from the fourth century to the present time, rejecting any about whose parentage nothing was known. He made a thorough study of these thousand and thirty as to their race, class, parentage, position in family and so on. What interests us is that he found the vast majority came from very large families, "much larger than the average family at the time they

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lived." The geniuses tended to be the oldest sons of large families or the youngest sons of large families. Only children made up a very small percentage of the thousand and thirty.

Granting that the usual precocity of the spoiled child is caused merely by association with grown-ups and does not result in remarkable powers in later life, why should it be considered a source of infection for nervous ills? Because misunderstanding of this precocity brings the child undue admiration and plays a great part in making him a confirmed egotist and poor competitor. Parents consider the precocity a mark of vastly superior powers and do not scruple to say so to the child, who naturally believes himself above his fellows. His ego develops abnormally with dire results when he grows older, goes out in the world and finds that every one does not consider him the remarkable being he has come to believe himself to be. Then, as Dr. Brill says, "the slightest depreciation, hardly enough to be noticed by the average person, is enough to throw him into fits of rage."

Dr. Neter found abnormal egotism even oftener in the only son than in the only daughter.

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ter. He also says that in a family of one son and one daughter both children frequently show abnormal egotism. The son has been brought up to believe himself the finest boy in the world and the daughter has been taught that no other girls can compare with her.

The way in which undue admiration during childhood unfits the child in later life for normal competition with others begins to show very early in relations with other children. Professor Bohannon's investigation showed that, even when very young, spoiled children, cut off from child companions, do not have good command of themselves socially. He found they have constant friction with their companions because they constantly demand their own way. At home they have it without question. With other children they do not join in games regularly and rarely excel in athletics. They are bad losers. So they devote themselves to reading and quiet amusements. Frequently they have peculiarities that make other children tease them as "queer" and "different." The boys are often bullied as "sissies" and "mama's boys." Instead of struggling to associate with other children and so having their



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peculiarities gradually rubbed off, such children learn to shun companions of their own age. To fill this lack of natural playmates many prefer the company of older people, some have imaginary child companions, others give a prominent place to dolls or pets, some will choose a companion who is much younger and frequently of the other sex. In short in childhood they begin the tendency not to compete with their equals.

Now we come to the suggestion that some abnormalities in the emotional life of the grown-up who has been a spoiled child may be the result of gorging the child with too much parental love. How preposterous that idea sounds! Can a child be loved too much? What harm can it do?

If we consider the way a child's affections should normally develop we easily see the harmful results of too much love. Naturally a child first loves his parents, as they are the first people he knows. Then he normally includes other members of the family in his growing affections, then later playmates, teachers, sweethearts, wife, and finally children of his own.



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But if from childhood a child has been kept from knowing and loving anyone but his parents, if other children have been avoided through fear of contagious disease or bad associations, if his mother has kept him from knowing girls "because they weren't good enough for him," then when he grows up he will undoubtedly feel awkward in the society of any but his parents and may be unable to find a mate and marry.

Dr. Brill, in his study of four hundred cases of patients who had been only or favorite children, found that only ninety-three of them had married, though their average age was thirty-four. In his opinion most of them remained old maids and old bachelors because they were unduly dominated by their attachment to their parents. An only daughter told Dr. Brill that she would never marry till she "found someone just like her father."

In this matter of the Œdipus and Electra complex I was interested in asking the views of the head of the Psychology Department of one of our Eastern colleges. This professor laughed at many parts of Freud's system, yet felt sure of the underlying truth of the Œdipus

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complex. Among this psychologist's own acquaintances there were so many cases of undue parental influence with dire results to the son's or daughter's normal development that it was impossible to deny the basic truth of Freud's theory that there is danger of gorging a child with too much parental love. One example this professor cited was of a man whose mother kept him so closely "tied to her apron strings" that he never dared look at a girl till she picked one out for him to marry. But even after his marriage he could not overcome the habit of giving his mother the first place and of always consulting her wishes rather than his wife's. The marriage proved a disaster.

Psychologists and doctors in this country take the view that such dire results may come to a boy or to a girl through the influence of either parent. Dr. Tannenbaum said that a case in point was of a mother who constantly made her only daughter feel her family was superior to any other she knew. The girl's grandparents had been eminent in various professions, but her father had lost money and "come down in the world," so the girl was brought up among small tradesmen and me-

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chanics whom she was taught to despise. As a result she was a neurotic old maid at forty with an obsession for talking about the past grandeurs of her family.

It must not be forgotten that the child who has too much association with the parents can be overinfluenced by either parent if there is dissension between the father and mother. There is no more ardent partisan than a child. The child who sides passionately with either parent in family quarrels may be overinfluenced by that partisanship throughout life.

Professor Woodworth of Columbia University called my attention to another cause of undue influence on the part of the mother that has been overlooked by Freud. In many families the father is the sole disciplinarian, so he incurs the children's fear and dislike, while their affection is centered on the mother. When this is the case with a child of either sex the tie between child and mother may become so narrowly closed in as to make affection to others difficult.

The motive of parents today who deliberately limit their families to one child or one son and one daughter is frequently the same that led

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parents of a few generations ago to desire many sons and daughters. That is, the motive is economic, the desire for the good financially of the family as a safeguard in the struggle for existence. The colonial parents lived on a rugged farm with many untilled acres still clogged with woods. To develop it there was no laboring class to be hired except an occasional bond servant. If their son was to hold up his head among the first of the settlement he must have strapping brothers to help clear and till the land, and sturdy sisters to milk and churn and bake and spin. Without knowledge of psychology colonial parents unwittingly provided needed companionship with equals and a wholesome sharing of parental love with many brothers and sisters.

Of course, every only child is not too much petted or developed into a neurotic grown-up, but it is well for parents to know wherein the danger lies. Just as the child with brothers and sisters can be spoiled, so an only child can achieve normal manhood or womanhood if it be guarded against the isolation and undue importance of its position. As classic examples of the different way only children may turn out,

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Dr. Brill cites Nero and Confucius. He says the former was a spoiled only child, while the latter was well brought up. Dr. Neter, too, emphasizes the good results of bringing up an only child as if he were not the only one.

I know a widow who had the courage to have seven small boys visit her for an entire summer to give companionship to her nine-year-old son, who is her only child. That other parents may be following her example is shown by this advertisement which I recently saw in a well-known weekly review:

“Parents of boy of eleven, only child, desire another boy of the same age to spend the summer with them at their country home. Interview desired.”

It is interesting to speculate as to how many of the eldest sons of large families who make up the largest class of Havelock Ellis's thousand and thirty British geniuses would have had their latent qualities of greatness brought out, had not the association of many brothers and sisters insured them against being spoiled.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE TOO-IMAGINATIVE CHILD

PARENTS' misunderstanding of their child's imagination may cause psychic wounds with severe after-effects throughout life. A child's imaginative play that starts with some visible object is easily understood by grown-ups. But frequently a young child's imagination takes a turn that to the parents is uncanny and distressing because they can not understand it without the aid of modern research in psychology.

Take examples of the two kinds of play.

What would little Paul do without that well-worn rocking chair in the living-room? Sometimes it's a fighting airplane, sometimes a camel rolling majestically over the desert. This rainy afternoon it's a big ship, and Paul is the captain.

"Mother, where shall I sail to?"

Mother can play while she sews. "Let's go to Spain," she suggests.

The good ship sets sail on a storm-tossed

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sea. She springs aleak, and narrowly avoids rocks and icebergs before she anchors in the Bay of Biscay.

Father comes home, and suggests sailing back with a cargo of lemons and olive oil. But before the return voyage is finished supper is ready. To Paul's disgust, his mother lifts him from the rocking-chair in mid-voyage.

"Oh, mother," he cries, lifting his feet gingerly from the rug. "You've put me down in the ocean and got me all wet!"

In imaginative plays such as this, with a visible starting-point from which the rest of the game grows, grown-ups know how to enter, though the water may not feel so wet to them as it does to Paul.

Take the other type of play.

Four-year-old Dora sits in the window-seat and waves her hand.

"Whom do you see out there?" asks her mother.

"Martha Pink."

Mother looks out—at an empty street.

"Why do you say you see Martha Pink? Who is she?"

"I do see her. She's a little girl I play with."



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Oh, there she is now. She's going to come in! "

Dora runs to the front door and lets in nobody-at-all, whom she pretends to lead by the hand to a chair. She brings this unseen Martha Pink crackers and water. She talks aloud to her, and apparently hears Martha Pink's answers. After a while Martha tells Dora she has to go home, so Dora helps her on with her coat and bids her good-bye, affectionately kissing thin air. Every day Martha returns for further play. Dora becomes so intimate with her that she knows all about Martha's family, the names and ages of her brothers and sisters, what Martha likes to eat, even the names of her pets.

All this starts from nothing at all, as far as any member of Dora's family can discover. Naturally, Dora's mother becomes worried. When she says there is no such person as Martha Pink, Dora cries and insists her little friend is there, sitting on the sofa and playing with a big doll.

Parents would be amazed if they could know what a large part such imaginary companions play in their children's lives, frequently without being mentioned to the families.

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Dr. Kirkpatrick, of the State Normal School at Fitchburg, Massachusetts, says that "a careful study of the matter will probably show that not only do a few lonely and highly imaginative children have these companions, but nearly all children have them in some form or for a greater or less period of time."

At Leland Stanford University, Miss Clara Vostrovsky made an investigation of forty-six imaginary playmates, and concluded that few grown-ups realize how very common they are or how large a part, for good or evil, they can play in a child's life. Dr. Nathan A. Harvey, of the State Normal School at Ypsilanti, Michigan, after investigating five hundred cases, estimated that six grown-ups out of every hundred asked gave distinct accounts of such imaginary companions. He thinks that, as children, many more had them for a few months or years and forget them.

What their existence involves is so little understood that many grown people who remember having had such playmates are reluctant to speak freely of them to an investigator. One of the fullest accounts on record, that of a teacher who calls herself Miss X., was given to

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a psychologist only on condition that the identity of the writer should be kept secret.

How should we meet the problem of imaginary companions? With a view to finding answers to the educational questions involved, psychologists have thoroughly investigated the nature of these unseen playmates and the cause of their coming. A comparison of the cases studied by Professor Earl Barnes and Miss Clara Vostrovsky at Leland Stanford University, and of a separate investigation made by Dr. Harvey, shows certain characteristics common to the majority of imaginary companions. A knowledge of these will help a mother to know whether her child's case is a typical one.

In the first place, the way the imaginary companion first appears is usually indefinite and not well remembered. It generally appears to children of three or four years.

The imaginary companion is as vivid as a living child, and is both seen and heard. But it is not a hallucination, since the child gradually realizes that it is different from living, objective children. The unseen playmate is about the same age as the child to whom it appears. In rare instances a grown person or an animal

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is the imaginary companion. One little boy had an elephant who "drew all the funeral processions in the world."

The imaginary companion is almost always a welcome playmate whose society is enjoyed. There is a rare instance of a child whose imaginary companion, Susie, was distasteful to her. An imaginary older person would frequently leave Susie with her to be minded. This would make the child unhappy because Susie was so "hateful."

The unseen playmate is either known by some common child's name or else by an outlandish name of the child's invention. Examples of the latter are Mrs. Rice-bone, Alice Ribbons, Hulla and his brother Bulla, Soggy and Boggy, and Maganeezia Slippety I.

The child generally makes the imaginary companion a frequent subject of conversation, describing it fully, unless the first mention of the strange visitor is laughed at or misunderstood. If these creatures of fancy are not sympathetically met, the child keeps them entirely to himself.

Most imaginary playmates live near by; a few dwell far away or in heaven. Many are great,

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beautiful and rich; some are peculiar, such as that companion of a little boy who was "only about three feet tall, and who seemed to him as if he could not speak nor hear." Many are only children, and a few go in pairs, and are opposite types—one rich, the other poor; one sympathetic, the other annoying.

Most imaginary companions bring others in their train, such as their mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters. There are few cases where family and pets do not belong to the imaginary children.

Their activities are replicas of the child's own daily experiences, varied with unusual happenings, such as trips to the moon, meeting dead people who talk, taking wonderful rides in sleighs drawn by hundreds of snow-white dogs.

Boys have imaginary companions less frequently than girls, or at least they outgrow them more quickly; for fewer men than women can recall them.

Why should children in different parts of the world, living under widely varying conditions, create imaginary companions who turn out to resemble each other closely? What is the com-

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mon cause back of all the typical cases? There are three different theories.

Many parents believe that these unseen playmates come from the spirit world. The child, so lately come from the great unknown, is supposed to have retained communication with it. For example, a little boy whose twin brother had died in infancy had an imaginary boy companion for whom he always set a place at table. He played constantly with this unseen child, generously sharing all his toys with him. The parents were sure he was visited by the spirit of his dead brother, whose existence in the flesh he could not remember.

Another instance, which was used as the nucleus of a charmingly fanciful short story, was of a little girl named Margery who was taken to a house in the country for the summer. She soon began to play constantly with an imaginary little girl whom she would describe consistently in every detail. One day a lady came to the house, and asked if she might go through it, as she used to live there and would like to revisit the room where her little girl had died. Her description of her dead child coincided in every particular with Margery's talk of her

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unseen playmate. Both mothers were convinced that the dead child's spirit still dwelt in the house, visible and audible only to the other little girl.

The second theory is that such fancies are the result of a defective or diseased brain. The child who has them is considered abnormal or insane. Dr. Harvey gives a pathetic instance of this. One of his students told her mother that *Imaginary Companions* had been announced as the subject of the next lecture in her psychology course. This mother went to Dr. Harvey and told him she had had such a playmate during her childhood. Her family had regarded it as an abnormal thing, to be stamped out and concealed. They had made her feel intense shame over it. All her life she had supposed that as a child she had been temporarily insane. She had always worried lest the condition should come back; yet her mortification was so great that she had never mentioned her experience to anyone, and had not dreamed that many other children had imaginary companions until her daughter spoke of the lecture subject. Her relief at hearing Dr. Harvey was pathetic.



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This brings us to the third theory—that of modern psychology, which holds that such play-mates are a manifestation of normal, healthy childhood, and perhaps even a sign of superior brain power.

To make clear why these fancies arise, Professor Earl Barnes takes this inventory of the mental furnishings of the child of three or four:

“You (as a child) have had many sensations, hurrying, crowding one another; you are constantly meeting things unknown before. So you are hardly surprised at anything that happens. To one who has not seen horses, a blue horse is no more remarkable than a black one, a salt tree is no more improbable than a pepper tree. To one who has not been brought face to face with the problems of birth and death, but who has seen people coming into and leaving his little circle from day to day, quite ignorant of the places whence they come or whither they go, there is nothing remarkable in the creation of a new being.

“Nor is it remarkable that a child associated from day to day with intelligences so superior to his own that he looks up to them as unfailing oracles, asking them gravely who God is and

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why flowers grow, . . . . should long for another intelligence like his own. . . . . He longs for the companionship of children like himself. If he has not these companions, he creates them.

“The child accepts these self-created imaginary companions so positively, and they are so opposed to our own wide experience of what really is, that they seem mysterious and occult. . . . . To one, however, who will try to put himself in the position of the new and inexperienced child, the imaginary child is no more marvelous than an Uncle John with whom the family are in constant communication by letter, though they do not see him.”

The craving for sympathetic understanding which creates imaginary companions is akin to the same craving that makes virtually all children love pets, though by no means all grown-ups do so. The child needs some one who is neither exacting and correcting like a grown-up, nor a rival like another child who wants the same toys at the same time he does. Pets are more passive, and the child frequently reads into them a sympathy they do not possess. “Kitty loves me very much,” a little girl says

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of a meek old cat that submits to over-affectionate mauulings but always seizes the first opportunity to run away and hide.

It is almost always the child with few playmates who creates imaginary ones. In all the cases studied, only one was of a child who had brothers and sisters to play with but preferred her unseen companion. Possibly that child was of a different type from her brothers and sisters and felt lonely and little understood with them.

By inquiring the occasion for their disappearance, Miss Vostrovsky throws light on the cause of imaginary companions. She found that one girl of fifteen "dropped them because we moved into town, and many of my playmates came to see me, and I went to see them." Miss X's long, painstaking account of her imaginary companions says they came to her whenever she was unoccupied, quiet, or alone. In reviewing Miss X's article, Miss Vostrovsky makes this interesting comment: "The fact that the writer's childhood was a happy one does not interfere with the inference that the fancies arose from that craving for sympathetic understanding which the slightest disappointment

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often brings to a child." So a mother need not conclude that the creation of an imaginary playmate means that her child is unhappy.

Miss Vostrovsky gives three other contributing causes in addition to loneliness. One is the desire to relive experiences that have been enjoyed by creating an imaginary companion who goes to picnics every day and eats all the chocolate cake she wants. Similarly, a desire for self-aggrandizement is involved like that of barbarians, and shown by the child imagining himself and the self-created playmate clad in silk and jewels and wonderfully brilliant, or in the opportunity given for patronizing others. Mingled with this is the child's desire to make himself useful by helping others, carefully dressing and feeding the imaginary visitors and solacing their griefs.

Now that we understand a little why children create imaginary playmates, there comes the question whether any light can be thrown upon the machinery that manufactures them. What is going on in the brain and eyes and ears of a child who so mysteriously sees and hears the non-existent?

Dr. Harvey explains it by the theory of the

projected image. He says that the same processes take place in the brain that occur when an actual child is seen and heard. That is, the nerves of the eye and the optic nerve connecting them with the center of sight in the brain are involved. In seeing a real child, nervous excitation travels into the brain-center from the outside, from the nerves of the eyes to the center of sight. In seeing a projected image of an imaginary child, the nervous impulse goes the opposite way, starting at the brain-center and traveling along the optic nerve outward to the eyes, there causing the same nervous disturbance in the retinas as would be caused if the light-waves from a real child entered the eyes. In short, a projected image is a visual idea that becomes as vivid as an actual perception. It is like thinking about a thing until you can see it. The same theory explains the projected sound of the voices of imaginary companions. Dr. Harvey thinks the great amount of nervous energy generated by children may be the reason their projected images are so much more like reality than those of grown-ups.

There is also a scientific explanation for the

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strange names children invent for these companions—a manifestation that often leads parents to the theory of influence from the spirit world.

Our child never heard such outlandish names from any of us, they say anxiously.

Psychologists consider such inventions merely manifestations of the child's speech instinct. Unlike animals, man is born with a speech-center located in the left side of the brain. Children are not taught to speak—they speak by instinct. They are merely taught French or English or whatever their native language happens to be. If they are not taught a language, they speak one of their own, as it is their instinct to communicate just as it is their instinct to eat. Well authenticated instances of such instinctive language have been recorded by Horatio Hale. One is a case of twins who talked together in a language of their own and were so well satisfied with each other's conversation that they were slow to learn English.

Dr. Harvey, too, has tabulated cases of two or more children who, when left alone a great deal, invented a language of their own in which they conversed fluently. One case was of chil-



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dren on a farm where the parents had to be away working in the fields almost all day and were taciturn when at home. From their gibbering talk the children were at first supposed to be idiots; but when placed in school they soon learned English and proved to be very bright. Another case was of the children of deaf-mutes, who invented a language of their own till outsiders taught them English. A child usually learns the names of everything from grown-ups. When he has a companion whom only he sees and hears, it is not unnatural that he should call on his own powers of inventive speech to give the imaginary playmate a name.

Let us now look into the type of child who creates imaginary companions, and so form some conclusions as to how to meet the educational problems they bring with them.

Professor Earl Barnes says the experience comes to perfectly normal, healthy children, but usually to those described as of a nervous temperament. That is such an elastic term that no two people mean exactly the same thing by it. A leading specialist in nervous diseases told Professor Barnes that he should expect to find abnormal nervous conditions accom-



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panying extreme cases, and that if such a belief is carried on for months or years it must leave the mind especially susceptible to hallucinations and superstitions in later life. That there are exceptions to this is proved by the case of the teacher, Miss X, who at the age of thirty was still visited by an imaginary companion. Yet all who knew Miss X described her as of a placid disposition, well-balanced and not at all nervous.

As to the brightness or dullness of the child who has imaginary playmates, Dr. Harvey concludes from his study of five hundred cases that "no stupid child ever had an imaginary companion." He considers that a large amount of nervous energy and strong impulses starting at the brain-centers are conditions for mental capacity. "Hence it is that we find nearly all cases of imaginary companions manifested in children who are distinctly above the average capacity for children of their own age. . . . The experience is an indication of unusual mental capacity."

Finally, how shall we treat these unseen comrades of our children? First of all, let us not repress them. Remember the cases of galling

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mortification, with resulting unhappiness for months. One little girl had an unseen playmate named Belle. One day, when her mother had invited in three little girls, the child immediately went to the place where she imagined Belle lived, and invited her. When she told her mother, she was told that Belle had better not come. The child reluctantly broke this news to Belle in as delicate a manner as possible, but wept bitterly and was unhappy for a long time over it.

Another little girl asked her mother not to sit down in a certain chair, because May, her imaginary playmate, was sitting there. The mother laughed and, not seeing any one in the chair, sat down on May and killed her. The child wept and brooded over the tragedy, but nothing could bring May back to her.

Such unsympathetic repressions not only cause deep temporary unhappiness, but they may also leave dangerous results in the child's later life. The child loses faith in his elders and keeps his fancies to himself. Often a distinct repression into the unconscious mind results—a very dangerous thing, believed by the Freudian school of psychologists to be the ma-

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jor cause of many grave mental disorders in adult life.

So a mother should meet these amazing childish confidences sympathetically and enter into them as far as she can, realizing that the play of imagination and fancy is one of mankind's greatest blessings. As Professor Barnes says, "we do not want our children to become prosaic, unlovely fact-hunters."

On the other hand, a mother should recognize the danger of encouraging a child too much in such fancies, so that he is led away from the real life of the world in which she is trying to teach him to take his place. He must be guided as soon as possible to distinguish the real from the fanciful. He must be assisted in the construction of a real world.

Professor Earl Barnes gives this interesting advice: "Let parents once admit, even passively, the existence of the stranger child, and it must ever afterwards be treated with respect. The child's world is a chaos: it will take a life-time to bring order and law into it. The mother represents to the child infinite wisdom and law. Thus the mother must be consistent. But if this non-existent and irresponsible be-

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ing is once accepted, it may become a disturbing element in the ethical training of the child."

He gives an example of a little girl who, when questioned as to the whereabouts of her mother's lost tooth-brush, said it had been taken by Olla, her imaginary playmate, to brush her dolly's hair. Professor Barnes draws the conclusion that "if the child had really played Olla took the tooth-brush, she told the simple truth and was blameless. But how long before she would be tempted to use such a convenient cloak for her own delinquencies?"

Another child, when told by her mother to go upstairs, replied that Hoolanus (her imaginary daughter) had told her not to do so. Hoolanus' commands would soon have become most convenient if she had not been taught at once that she must take orders from her parents alone.

The wise middle course recognizes both ways of treating imaginary companions, encouraging them and discouraging them. The mother can recognize the good of these unseen visitors in taking the place of real playmates to children who are much alone and in calling into play inventive powers; but, lest the child be,

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tempted to dream too long and lose touch with reality and truth, she can take a hint from the fact that boys outgrow these fancies more quickly than girls. Perhaps girls are shielded too much from healthy outdoor activities.

Little Jimmy outgrows his imaginary playmates through playing baseball or absorbedly constructing a shack with other boys. Little Dora plays on with her dream children while she is learning to sew or mechanically practicing scales on the piano. So she is apt to keep away from real children and to be satisfied with those of her imagination.

Happy is the child whose parents accept the unseen companions naturally, yet who do not allow them to absorb the child's attention too much.

## CHAPTER V

### THE BACKWARD CHILD AND THE PRODIGY

NO ONE is more anxious to look into the future than a mother. The old-time traveling phrenologist knew that he could easily persuade a hard-working woman to part with her pin-money if he would feel the bumps on her children's heads and foretell future greatness for them. In his recollections of his boyhood John Burroughs tells how a quiet evening on the mountain farm was enlivened by one such traveling "professor," who prophesied that John would one day become rich. So he did, according to the simple standards of that neighborhood, though the world outside regarded him as rich in things other than money.

Science has always turned a cold shoulder to phrenology as a crude means of determining character, and has developed other ways of attacking the fascinating problem of reading the latent capabilities of children. The French psychologists have made elaborate classifications of types of character and imagination.

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Next in historical order come mental tests, such as the Binet-Simon and others, by which the degree of feeble-mindedness in subnormal children and the degree of intelligence in normal children can be accurately measured.

Like the X-ray for the body, these searchlights into the mind can best be used by psychologists or expert teachers with opportunity to examine hundreds of children. Let us look into other ways by which psychologists can help a mother to recognize latent possibilities of talent in her children and so assist such hidden forces to develop. I was talking one day with the mother of a great writer. "If I had only realized when he was a child what talents he had," she said sadly, "how differently I should have treated him! I was always fighting him, trying to get him to be like other boys and to study subjects in which he had no interest. We should be more in sympathy today if I had understood him better as a child. He feels that he has accomplished his career in spite of me."

If that mother could have known some of the recent studies of psychologists and sociologists, she would have understood her boy better. For,



while psychology makes no claim to any absolutely definite way of measuring genius in children as it can measure feeble-mindedness, it does throw great light on the nature of child genius through painstaking studies of the childhood of great men and women.

The first surprising truth that these studies reveal is that the backward child stands about the same chance of future greatness as does the infant prodigy. It does not seem to be generally known that Lombroso's theory of genius's affinity with criminality and insanity has been discarded. Lombroso himself, after further study of his theory, so modified it as to make it virtually null and void. There is now general agreement with the conclusion of Havelock Ellis that *the real affinity of genius is with born imbecility*.

The studies of the childhood of great men made by Jastrow, Sully, and Havelock Ellis, and shorter studies by other psychologists, explain this astonishing statement. They show that, as children, geniuses fall naturally into two classes—those who were exceptionally stupid, and those who were infant prodigies, acclaimed as geniuses from early years. It is

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rare for geniuses to be just the average commonplace type of child. They are either remarkably dull or remarkably bright. •

An example of the backward type is Sir Walter Scott, who was considered a dunce. The only profession his despairing father could see he had any aptitude for was that of a strolling fiddler. Hume was described by his mother as "uncommon weak-minded." The mother of the poet Chatterton summed him up at the age of six as "little better than an absolute fool." A long list of geniuses who were considered dullards as children includes Davy, Darwin, Linnaeus, Humboldt, Pasteur, Watt, Fulton, Schiller, Heine, Goldsmith, Beecher, Rousseau, Froebel, Whistler, Patrick Henry, and Poe.

Examples of geniuses who were of the child-prodigy type are Mozart, who composed music at the age of six, and Mendelssohn, who at eight corrected an oratorio of Bach and at fourteen performed the fourteenth opera he had composed. Other geniuses who were precocious children are Dante, Browning, Pope, Macaulay, Handel, Verdi, Brahms, Bach, Corot, Murillo, Raphael, Michael-Angelo, and Turner.

So many geniuses have shown their remark-

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able powers as children that it has been said, "He who never created in youth will never create at all." On the other hand, there are many infant prodigies who never become anything greater.

When we consider the class of geniuses who as children were dullards, we find innumerable other child dullards who never developed any genius whatever. As Andrew Lang said, "Coleridge was considered a 'dafty' as a child, but how many other children there must have been in school with him who were also considered 'dafties' and who amounted to little more in later life."

So, where the mother most needs help from the psychologist is to learn how to distinguish between the dullard-genius and the dullard-dunce-forever; between the precocious child who is a budding genius and the precocious child who is only "a small, fatigued grown-up," and has been compared to the early-riser, "conceited all the forenoon of life, stupid and uninteresting all the afternoon."

Trying first to distinguish between the dull-appearing child-genius and the dull-forever child, we are helped by Havelock Ellis's ex-

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planation of why one type of genius is dull in childhood. This, he says, is the born-clumsy type, with very poor muscular coordination and marked clumsiness of bodily control. Ellis feels that to be born unsuited to many of the ordinary activities of daily life gives a favorable condition for the development of extraordinary abilities in some one line, *provided these are present in a latent state*. In other words, the child who can do many things easily needs to make no special effort along any one line, while the child who is born inapt along many lines will center all his attention on developing any one kind of aptitude he may possess. Havelock Ellis defines genius as “a highly sensitive and complexly developed adjustment of the nervous system along special lines, with accompanying tendency to defect along other lines.”

To this we might add Professor William James's noting of sustained attention as a characteristic of genius. If we find a dull child who cannot concentrate attention long on any subject, we conclude that he is likely to remain dull; while if there is one subject on which he concentrates to the exclusion of all others, he is apt to turn out pre-eminent in it.

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Psychologists now recognize that measures of intelligence must be supplemented by tests of powers of application. Professor June Downey of the University of Wyoming has worked out a method of measuring application.

Sir Walter Scott was not interested in his school work; but his own line of preoccupation showed clearly, if his parents could only have seen it. He was a noisy boy, wont to yell old poems at the top of his voice. He loved to roam over the lonely hills. When he was not wandering alone, he read and read, and remembered all the reading he had devoured.

The line of particular interest may show plainly, even though the child's performances in it are no better than the average. For instance, Andrew Lang criticizes Tennyson's youthful poems as no better than any other boy's; but they showed his particular bent and great powers of concentration.

In cases where the natural bent does not show so plainly, we must remember that some children have unusual reticence, so that, even if they themselves recognize some one overwhelming interest they are slow in making it known. The American psychologist, Dr. Guth-

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rie, thinks many geniuses are considered dull in childhood because of this unrecognized precocity of reticence. This may be due to an early development of the critical faculty, as was the case with the poet Heine and the philosopher Hegel. Preoccupation with his chosen line and reticence in making it known sometimes take the form of dreaminess and are mistaken for laziness, as was the case with Balzac. In more fortunate cases this state is recognized and treated as a sign of unusual promise, as was the happy lot of Descartes.

An unusual case of unrecognized latent powers in a child is told by Professor Shields in his autobiographical study *The Making and Unmaking of a Dullard*.

As a child he was considered so hopelessly stupid that all effort to teach him was given up and he was allowed to rusticate on his father's country place. At sixteen he could not read or write. But then his own determination asserted itself, so that he began a belated education, and ultimately became a professor of psychology, able to explain his own case as a warning.

Turning now to the problem of recognizing



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among precocious children those whose pre-eminence is not merely a passing thing, a false dawn, we can lay down two general rules. First, if the precocious child's accomplishments are those that would not be a mark of genius in a grown person with equal opportunities of instruction, we may conclude that the child is not a genius, but is merely precocious for his years, probably because of unusual teaching. For instance, a child who speaks several languages at five or six years of age is frequently hailed as a genius; yet the chances are that when he is grown up he will simply be a normally intelligent being with good training in languages. This type is said by Ellis to show a spongelike receptivity, but has no aptitude for original thinking, so that after the period of mental receptivity no further development takes place.

In this class psychologists are apt to place Winifred Stoner, whose mother early taught her many branches of study with great success. Another well known example of the spongelike receptivity of the infant mind is that of the baby adopted by Professor Olerick and taught by him in accordance with his theories that the



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earliest years of childhood should be used for education.

This child knew her letters at the age of seventeen months, and at two years and eleven months could read at sight. She was exhibited in public at the age of three, when she read English, French, and German, read numbers to octillions, spelled long lists of hard words, and used a typewriter.

According to Professor O'Shea of the University of Wisconsin, such performances rarely mean true genius, for these precocious children have often learned words and formulae without understanding their meaning. He feels that every normal five-year-old child has performed much more difficult feats of learning, in discovering the qualities of the human beings around him and adjusting himself to them, than would be essential in learning to speak sentences in Spanish, French, German, and Greek.

The dependence of this type of precocious child on unusual training, and the probability that such early talents will not flower into genius, is also recognized by Professor Sakaki of Tokyo in a study of unusually gifted pupils in Japanese schools.

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In very rare instances a child who is already a born genius receives unusual training. For instance, there is John Stuart Mill, whose father taught him to read Greek and Latin at the age of three and gave him a thorough classical education at a very early age. The boy's natural abilities enabled him really to understand all he was taught. In later years he said his father's early training had given him an advantage of twenty-five years over his competitors.

So we come to the second rule in distinguishing between merely precocious children and true child geniuses. If the child has some special gift dependent on sense impressions, such a gift as by no means every normal grown-up possesses, and if, added to this, the child has power of sustained attention, the chances are that he has real genius.

Gifts dependent on great strength of sense impressions fall in the realm of music and art. Sully and Jastrow, both of whom tabulated the age at which genius showed in each field to find its average age of appearance, agreed in finding that musical geniuses show their gifts the earliest.

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The average age at which great musicians and artists made their first valuable productions is thirteen years and eight months. There are many striking examples of great musical geniuses who developed even earlier. I have already quoted the remarkable performances of Mozart and Mendelssohn as children. Rubinstein played the piano in public at the age of ten; Liszt at twelve. Saint-Saëns, best known to Americans as the composer of the opera *Samson et Dalila*, was another infant prodigy. Here is an account of him published in a Paris newspaper in 1847:

“ Little Saint-Saëns, eleven and a half years old, already knows Greek, translates Virgil satisfactorily enough, delights in algebra and logarithms, all of which does not prevent his being an excellent musician and playing the piano, just as Mozart and Liszt played at his age. Madame the Duchess of Orléans asked M. Halévy to invite the young virtuoso and his teacher, M. Stamaty, to come to the Tuileries, in order that the Comte de Paris might make the acquaintance of this little musical marvel. This intimate royal recital has taken place. Young Saint-Saëns, who had brought his music,

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left it in the ante-chamber, and played from memory a Beethoven sonata, a Handel air and variation, some Bach fugues with their preludes, and then a grand fantasy by Hummel."

Many of the musical geniuses of today were infant prodigies. The pianist Josef Hofmann and the violinist Jascha Heifetz both gave successful public concerts at a tender age.

Such children, according to Queyrat's classification, have the auditive type of memory with marvelous powers of actually rehearsing sounds in imagination.

The precocity of artists depends on great powers of visual imagination. Mantegna was admitted to the Guild of Painters at the age of eleven. At four Sir Thomas Lawrence showed such skill in drawing that callers at his father's home were asked: "Will you have him quote the poets or take your portrait?" A portrait-painter, well known in New York today, started taking commissions when she was twelve. Gainsborough was able to make an accurate likeness in his early teens.

Other child artists are Canova, Murillo, Tintoretto, Raphael, Titian, Michael-Angelo, Ruysdael, Van Dyke, Rubens, and Correggio.

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Poets and writers—that is, genius of what may be called general imagination—develop later, their first productions averaging about the age of fifteen years and six months; and philosophers and historians with genius in abstract thinking develop last of all, at seventeen years and six months. The averages quoted are from Jastrow's tables.

Strangely enough, mathematical genius appears very early instead of later with other powers of abstract thinking. An example of this is William James Sidis, who entered Harvard at eleven, and in his first year there read an original paper before the Mathematical Club on "Fourth Dimensional Bodies." When he had finished, a professor answered some questions in terms different from those the boy had used; whereupon young Sidis said: "I cannot see that you have added anything to the discussion."

A strange by-product of mathematical and occasionally of musical genius is not infrequently shown by idiots of the type called matroids, or *idiots savants*, in which what amounts to genius in one or two lines exists in an idiot mind. They have extraordinary memory for

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long figures, dates, and past events. Such a type was Blind Black Tom of Massachusetts, an imbecile born in 1850. At the age of eleven he was exhibited throughout the country as a musical prodigy. He had a large repertoire of classic and operatic music, which he played by ear. His phenomenal memory enabled him to repeat a discourse fifteen minutes long without losing a syllable, yet without understanding a single word of it. Havelock Ellis feels that idiots of this type bridge the gulf between genius and idiocy.

There are two exceptions to be noted to the classification of child geniuses into the dull-appearing type and the prodigy type, with some one particular gift depending on sense-impressions. Havelock Ellis recognizes a third very rare class that in early years is marked solely by great physical energy, or even by brutality. Sooner or later this great physical energy is transferred into intellectual energy.

The second exception is the rare child with no one special gift, but with such outstanding powers in every direction that he could apparently excel in any line he pursued. Such a child was Victor Hugo, who was called *un en-*



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*fant sublime.* Another was Goethe. According to Dr. Guthrie, "all who taught him as a boy claimed him as their own."

Suppose a mother feels that she has a child with decided promise of genius, either of the dullard type, stupid and clumsy in most ways, but deeply interested in some one subject, or of the prodigy type, with some one shining talent joined to the necessary powers of sustaining attention. It would be intensely interesting to her to know how far the conditions of that child's heredity and environment correspond with those that have been found to surround the majority of geniuses.

Havelock Ellis, in his study of one thousand and thirty British geniuses from the fourth century to modern times, found, as did Galton, that genius was higher in proportion to the numbers among those of pure race. As to the social class, he found that more geniuses were the children of clergymen than of members of any other profession. On the other hand, there were many more idiots among the children of clergymen than of any other class.

Both Ellis and Galton agree that genius tends to run in families. Ability is just as likely to



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be inherited from the mother as from the father, perhaps even more so. Ellis says that the very frequent cases in which men of great ability have declared that they owe everything to their mothers have often been put aside as expressions of amiable weakness; but he finds it difficult to believe that men of preeminent intellectual acuteness are unable to estimate the characters of their own parents.

Men of ability tend to be the offspring of predominantly boy-producing families. Women of ability tend to be the offspring of predominantly girl-producing families.

Fathers of eminent persons have been middle-aged and to a marked extent elderly at the time of the distinguished child's birth; while mothers have been predominantly at the period of greatest vigor and maturity, about thirty or to a somewhat unusual extent even older. There have been notably few young fathers and still fewer young mothers of geniuses. The majority of geniuses were delicate in health as children.

The next question that the mother of a budding genius needs to look into is how she should expect budding talent to choose its course of

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development, and how she can assist it. For one thing, she can arrange her child's life so that he may have a goodly portion of what Professor Davidson considers the chief condition that fosters literary and artistic genius—that is, solitude. Tennyson was brought up in a rectory so remote that the news of Waterloo did not reach it till several months after the battle. The lonely moors fostered the talents of the three Brontë sisters. Isolation developed George Eliot.

Both Ellis and Lombroso agree that at about the age of puberty the direction into which the latent genius will turn is determined, if it has not already shown itself. Ellis notes how many geniuses took a journey at that age, during which the shock of novel environment acted as a powerful stimulant to the budding aptitudes and pointed the direction into which talents should be turned. This age of puberty is that of greatest impressionability to external causes. Lombroso says: "Youth is then in a condition of latent explosibility, ready to burst out under the pressure of every influence." Sometimes at this age the budding genius will be influenced by reading a book or hearing a

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story that he has heard a hundred times, but which just at this moment agrees with his particular condition of soul. The directing influence may be that of some person.

When the impulse comes at puberty to choose the line of endeavor in which genius is to flow, parental opposition to the choice of a career often causes long, painful years of floundering and wasted effort. Whistler's endeavor to make himself a soldier and his unsuccessful career at West Point is a case in point. Poe came of rigid Puritan ancestry, to which literary ideals such as his were unknown.

Perhaps if the puzzled parents of these geniuses had lived today they might have been helped to recognize their children's true vocations by psychological tests. A test of the plot sense and creative imagination necessary in a writer has been worked out by Dr. Slosson and Professor June Downey.

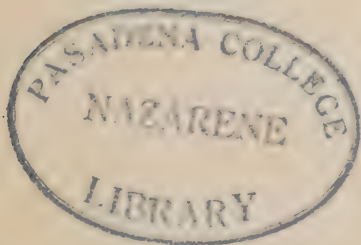
Whatever understanding of the genius as a child psychology may give in future, the way of the great man will not be easy. As Professor Davidson says, the chief business of life in early years is in learning how to do things. From the first the process is in great degree

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imitative. If in a group one child thinks out a method of his own, his pride and satisfaction is checked by the outcry that follows his effort. No wonder the future genius is often violent, ferocious, fond of solitude, and disagreeable in society. Andrew Lang thinks an exception to this state of affairs is the born artist, who is usually popular at school because of his ability to make pictures of his school-mates and teachers. But for the school days of the boy destined to be a poet Lang has great pity.

The genius needs the understanding of his own parents. Those who have had it have paid it glowing tributes. "Mentally and morally, I am a part of my mother," wrote Huxley.



## CHAPTER VI

### WHY CHILDREN LIE

**I**N A crowded court-room a six-year old child who had unhappily seen a crime committed, was brought to the witness stand. The first question asked of her was, "Do you know what truth is?"

The abashed child hung her head and faltered, "No."

Around the court-room went a murmur of, "How stupid! Six years old! She ought to know better."

Such is the usual attitude of grown-ups towards truth-telling in children. Pilate's question, "What is truth?" which has echoed through the centuries, is expected to be answered instinctively by a little child.

Moreover, children are not only supposed to know truth innately, but they are also expected to have a natural love for it and to abhor lying. Should a child fall short of this standard he is regarded with horror by truth-loving parents. The cropping-out of "original sin" is fre-

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quently the only explanation they can find for his trespasses against truth telling.

After painstaking studies of hundreds of children, psychologists agree that truth-telling is not inborn. Their conclusions uphold Emilie Poulsson's belief that "truth-telling is not a child's virtue but the supreme attainment of maturity."

There are three good reasons for children's natural inability to know truth. The greatest of these is ignorance of such an abstract quality. As Professor Earl Barnes says: "Children lie because they cannot tell the truth, the truth involves knowledge." Young children have no natural means of knowing the subtle differences between truth, fancy and falsehood. Jean Paul Richter says, "During the first five years children say neither what is true nor what is false—they merely talk. Further, they find great pleasure in exercising their new art of speech, and so they often talk nonsense merely for the sake of hearing their new acquisition of language. So a child may be a truth-teller and yet not always a teller of what is strictly true. He simply reports the string of mingled fact, fancies, supposition and hearsay that his active

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brain has fastened upon. Truth is relative."

The story is told of a little adopted girl who had been taken from a barren home and was soon found to be untruthful. One day after her adopted mother had a long and serious talk with her on the wickedness of lying, the child burst into tears and said, "Why doesn't someone tell me what the truth is so I can tell it?"

A second great difficulty in knowing truth lies in children's extremely poor powers of observation. Many tests by psychologists show this lack of capacity to observe and report correctly. For instance, in William Stern's experiments children were shown a simple colored picture of a peasant family at dinner. Not only did they fail to see all the objects that were there, but their imaginations, taking one or two of the observed objects as starting points, made many of the children report they had seen various things that were not in the picture.

In fact many children are so easily suggestible that they can readily be made to believe black is white. Many different experiments show this extreme suggestibility of childhood. For example, O. Kosog tested forty children



of an average age of eight and a half by showing each one a white card with a small dot of ink on it. The child was told to walk away till he could no longer see the dot. After he had done this three times a card with no ink dot on it was substituted without his knowledge. Kosog similarly tested children in touch, hearing, taste and smell. Out of his four hundred and forty experiments suggestion succeeded in sixty-five percent of the cases. Good pupils proved more easily suggestible than poor ones. There was little difference in the suggestibility of the two sexes.

Anyone can easily test how this extreme suggestibility of children leads to many false statements. At a dinner table a suggestion that the meat is tainted, the butter strong or the milk sour will invariably find a childish adherent who will agree that the perfectly palatable food in question is inedible.

The growth of knowledge of truth is very slow. So in the opinion of Professor Earl Barnes lying is negligible at the age of three, unimportant at six, serious at nine and tragic at twelve. After many experiments in the growth of truth-telling a group of psychologists

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concluded that on no account should any child under the age of fifteen be put on the witness-stand.

Certainly parents are not satisfied to stop at the conclusion that all children are born liars, whether because of ignorance of truth, of poor powers of observation or of extreme suggestibility. Nor do the investigations of psychologists stop there. The gradual growth of powers of truth-telling has been observed and tabulated, the motives for telling falsehoods have been studied, and suggestions offered for helping children attain knowledge and love of truth.

The gradual growth of truth-telling was tested in nine hundred and thirty-seven children between the ages of seven and thirteen in London Board schools. The children were asked to give written answers to the following hypothetical case. "A boy named Tom had a kind uncle who often gave him presents. One day this uncle sent him a picture which Tom thought very ugly. When the uncle came to see him he said, 'Well, Tom, how did you like the picture I sent you?' What would you have answered if you had been Tom? Why?"

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The English psychologist, Miss K. G. Cash, made a study of the nine hundred and thirty-seven replies to this problem. She found truthful answers increased steadily from seven till the age of ten or eleven, then lying recommenced at the age of twelve. The older children saw openings other than a choice between direct truth-telling and lying. At the age of twelve awakening social instincts and sympathies gave a new motive for lying in the desire to soften impolite answers. At seven or eight the children's replies were very direct, brief and brutal in their sincerity. For instance a girl of eight answered, "It is ugly. I did not like it." A boy of eight said, "I did not like it very much. I would dream about it." In marked contrast is this softened statement of a girl of thirteen, "I did not like it very much, uncle, but I shall keep it because you gave it to me."

Boys were found to be more truthful than girls in early ages, but became less truthful than girls at twelve and thirteen. While girls became somewhat more truthful at twelve or thirteen than they were before, they had an evident struggle to maintain their truthfulness

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by the side of increased sympathy and good taste. For instance, a girl of thirteen said, "I do not like the picture in itself but as a present I think it very nice." A girl of twelve said, "Well, uncle, it was not a pretty picture, certainly, but I like it quite as well as the other things you gave me, and what a nice frame it has."

Evasion of the main issue was highest at twelve in both sexes. Such answers were given as, "Thank you, uncle. How much did it cost?"

Before we look into the motives for lying in children old enough to have some knowledge of truth, we must distinguish between the various kinds of lies. They fall naturally into two classifications, normal lies, and the abnormal type variously known as morbid, psychological or pathological lies. The abnormal type may be roughly defined as lies that seem true to the teller, although they are not directly due to any outside suggestion.

Isolated cases of morbid lying may always be found among children. At times there are widespread epidemics of such phenomena. When a hundred thousand persons were put to

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death for witchcraft in the sixteenth century, the majority of the witnesses and many of the accused were children. The hysteria of believing in impossible occurrences and of making false accusations that seemed real to the accusers was in epidemic form. Girls between the ages of twelve and fourteen were usually the chief witnesses. Although today false accusations by hysterical young girls do not take the form of belief in witchcraft, they are by no means unknown. Hysterical false statements endanger the reputations of innocent teachers, clergymen and others.

Similarly, in many cases of reported psychological phenomena, investigation has proved that the wonders were falsely reported by hysterical young girls, who themselves believed they had seen and heard the strange products of their imaginations. In some instances they had even produced the phenomena that were supposed to be of psychic origin. The Antigoniish ghost that was investigated by Dr. Morton Prince was found to have its origin in the doings and pathological lying of Mary Ellen MacDonald, a fourteen-year-old girl. Dr. G. Stanley Hall says that in cases of reported psychic phe-

nomena the motto should be not, *Cherchez la femme*, but, *Cherchez la tendron*, — “ Seek the flapper.”

A different and less abnormal type of morbid lying is found in elaborate, continuous and acted lies which are also usually told by girls. Illustrations of this type could be indefinitely multiplied but two will be enough.

In the *Archives de Psychologie* F. Guillermet reports the case of a very imaginative girl of twelve. On being reprimanded for bad work in school she excused herself by saying the birth of a little sister in her home had put the house in confusion. This baby was the subject of conversation between teacher and pupil for several months, and survived various infantile maladies. Finally it died and the pupil was excused to attend the funeral. When she called to express sympathy for the bereaved mother, what was the teacher's astonishment to learn there had never been either baby, disease or death. This child eight years later became a remarkable spiritual medium.

Dr. G. Stanley Hall reports a case of a girl of eight who came to school one morning in the fall with a full account of a summer's visit to



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Europe. During the trip she had ridden a horse, had a railroad accident, experienced a severe storm at sea and had many other adventures. The truth was she had never left home. The case history of psychoanalysts is full of lies such as this.

In all cases of morbid lying the advice of trained medical psychologists should be sought. In many instances the child patients will be found mentally defective. In other cases the children will be found to be normal, but their environment may be unsuitable for normal development. A change in the conditions of their lives may cause the abnormal lying to disappear. As Dr. G. Stanley Hall says of children who practice any type of morbid lying, "Their often thwarted and aborted lives show, I think, a propensity to attract attention and to be of importance which is abnormal only in its degree and is morbidly and precociously developed. Some of these cases represent the revolt of natures handicapped by heredity and cramped in a narrow sphere, repressed. . . . Some are intoxicated with lust to broaden their experience, be and do things they have heard others were or did, or to make possibilities



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actual. Moreover, there is a strange tingling inebriation with the sense of being alive, that flagrant falsehood better than anything else can excite in some natures. Precisely what they are not, they assume; what they cannot achieve, they do; wishes riot and reel towards realization. They become drunk and debauched with lies as many have recourse to strong drink to escape the stress and strain of real life when it is hard, poor and mean. It is this viewpoint which reveals the best of all cures and preventives of lying, viz. to enlarge and enrich actual life, to fill out experiences, so as to narrow the chasm between fact and fiction. The more physical development that tends to establish a close bond between knowing and doing, the more varied, interesting and absorbing the daily life, the more the best and strongest feelings are stirred and given vent; the more the youthful soul palpitates with the joy of existence and accomplishment, the more zestful is the knowledge acquired and the less is the temptation to every form of lying. Conversely, where life is made dull and straitened by the environment or tense by disease or defect, so that the soul is habitually hungry, here

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we have temptation to many ways of escape, from runaways to falsehood.”

So much for the morbid lies which are fortunately the less common sort.

For the telling of normal lies by children old enough to have some idea of the difference between truth and falsehood there are various motives. In the opinion of Dr. G. Stanley Hall selfishness is the chief of these. His belief is borne out by the replies of the London Board school children. At the age when the majority of them gave untruthful answers, egotistic reasons for these answers were most frequently given. Miss Cash thinks this serves to show that children of eight have little real sense of truth, and that lie-telling is unpremeditated. It is merely a matter of expediency to bring about personal satisfaction. Looking at the matter from the biological standpoint we know the child of eight is a self-seeking little savage. His instinct is to get what he wants by the easiest means. Moreover, like the savage he is frequently a slave to his fears, particularly if he has endured harsh punishments or violent scoldings. Fear is the great underlying cause of many selfish lies. One little boy said a lie

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was a "very present help in time of need." If a child finds lying protects him from severe consequences of his misdeeds his primitive instinct is to use the lie as his most ready weapon of self-defence. Richter says, "Do you not understand that you apply a fiery trial to children when by ill-concealed anger and the prospect of punishment after confession, you place them in the dangerous position of choosing whether they shall obey instinct or idea?" Truth-telling is an abstraction born of civilization in which children have not yet grown to a place.

Additional motives for normal lies are laziness, that is the telling of the first thing thought of rather than bothering to report accurately, loyalty to others, and desire to please others. Such lies as well as lies from ignorance or self-interest may all be told by healthy, normal children whose lives are rich in emotional outlets and wholesome opportunities for self-expression. Lying is more frequent when the vitality is low. Some investigations seem to show that, like crime, lying is more prevalent in extremely hot weather.

How can children be taught to outgrow nor-

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mal lying? What help can psychologists give parents in their difficult task of teaching children to know and love truth? We have found lying to be a very complex matter caused, as Dr. G. Stanley Hall says, "by such diverse and opposite tendencies that a course of treatment which would cure one form may aggravate another." One child may lie because his imagination is starved, another may lie because his imagination is over-stimulated by too many moving-pictures and adventure tales. Each case must be dealt with according to the individual circumstances. Yet there are certain recommendations of psychologists which are helpful in practically all cases.

Parents can distinguish between fancy and falsehood, trying to encourage the one while discouraging the other. Dr. G. Stanley Hall speaks of "the noble lies of poetry, art and idealism" and wisely says it is "no triumph to clip the wings of fancy." A suggestion as to how to teach the difference between fact and fiction is found in the case of a six-year-old girl. This child shocked a prim aunt by saying that on a drive through New England lanes she had seen five green monkeys and a purple

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snake. The mother wisely showed no surprise but said, "That's a good story. Let me see if I can make up one, too. I went driving yesterday and I saw four cherry-colored cats and an orange horse. Now, what other story can you tell?"

Too much in the way of truth-telling should not be required of very young children lest, falling short of expectations, they will give up hope of ever learning the difficult art. Sisson says, "It would seem that the criminal court which does not require a prisoner to testify against himself is more considerate of human frailty in the adult than the parental or pedagogical judiciary is of the tender conscience of a child." No promise that is supposed to be kept for a long time should ever be exacted from a young child. For the child is a monomaniac. Often he becomes wholly absorbed in some one thing he is doing or making, and all remembrance of a promise vanishes.

A great constructive help which grown-ups can give to children is to set them a consistent example of truth-telling. It is a virtue born of civilization, but it is very imperfectly practiced. In conducting their business affairs

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grown-ups frequently find occasion to deviate from the scrupulous truth-telling they require of their children. The arts of advertising, promoting, buying and selling, even of manufacturing with the help of adulteration involve great strain upon truthfulness. Possibly children do not realize this at an early age, but the same spirit in their parents frequently shows itself in ways that come to their attention. "White lies" are condoned. Many grown-ups, if confronted with the problem of the undesired present from Uncle Tom, would solve it no more truthfully than did the majority of the London Board school children. The bad example is frequently set in other ways. Many a child has seen his parents buy a half-fare ticket for him when he was of the age that required a full fare. Perhaps the parents have even laughed with the child over getting the best of the railroad.

Another way in which children are frequently set a bad example is by having promises made to them which are lightly broken at the convenience of grown-ups. The child's reaction is often like that of a little girl who had been promised a drive with her father and mother.



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When they suddenly changed their minds and drove off without her she called after them, "There go two liars."

The study of science is a great help in showing children examples of truth. "Science teaching," says Felix Adler, "has the advantage over other branches of learning that the palpable nature of the facts dealt with makes it possible to note and check the least deviation from truth." Both exact mathematical science and the natural sciences are helpful. Two and two always make four. A chemical reaction between the same two substances under the same conditions invariably remains the same. Here are examples of the most absolute truth known to us.

Another great need of a child is to be under such careful observation that no lie goes undetected. One lie told successfully with the result of bringing the child some gratification or shielding him from something he fears will naturally lead quickly to others. Fortunately young children are crude in the arts of deception and are usually easily found out. When it occasionally happens that a lie is suspected but cannot readily be proved, the association



method of psychoanalysis might be used, though it is a dangerous tool if clumsily handled. The method consists of "playing a game" with a child by giving him a list of words and asking him after each word to name the first thing it suggests to him. Lying involves hesitation. When a word is given that suggests the thing he has lied about, the child will hesitate to name what is in his mind and will think of something else to say. This substitution requires time. If the time involved in naming the association each word brings up is counted (on the second hands of a watch, preferably a stop watch) it will be found that where there is a guilty secret in the child's mind he will take many seconds or even minutes longer than usual to give an association to any word connected with it. For instance, at a house where I was once making a visit, a large cake in a box mysteriously disappeared. The young son of the family and a boy who was helping in the kitchen were suspected, but they both denied all knowledge of the petty theft. My friend and I decided to try them with the association method which we had used in experimental psychology laboratories. We summoned the

boy from the kitchen who appeared as scared as if he were to be subjected to the black arts. One by one we gave him a long list of words unrelated to the cake and asked him to name what each word suggested to him. When we said "Tree," he replied, "Green," with no hesitation. But when we interspersed words such as "Eat," "Sweet," "Pie," or, "Box," he hesitated perceptibly, evidently fumbling in his mind for some association other than "Cake," which was what he was really thinking of. Our suspicion that he was one of the culprits was upheld when he was afterwards heard to remark to the young son of the family that "they never once got the word 'cake' out of him, try as they would."

One word of caution as to the use of the association method with children. To let a child know that he is suspected of telling a lie is unwise. It gives him a bad suggestion. A wise father once said to me, "I never let my children feel they were liars even if they had told lies. I tried to make them feel they were truthful at heart, and that the lie was just a temporary slip. I encouraged them to feel pride in truth-telling rather than shame in lying."

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Self-depreciation from being falsely suspected is bitterly felt by children and involves serious danger if carried too far. The extreme suggestibility of young children makes it possible to force confessions from them of lies never told, misdeeds never committed. By suspecting a child falsely, a lie may be forced from him in the form of a confession. A mother once told me of how she had forced a false confession from her five-year-old boy. Someone had given him a piece of candy. His mother put it on a table, saying he must keep it to eat after his dinner. Coming quickly into the room she found the child beside the table and the candy nowhere to be seen. She immediately accused him of eating it. He denied doing so but acted guilty and confused. The mother repeated her accusation sternly and forcefully till he cried and confessed he had eaten the candy. Afterwards she found it in the waste-basket beside the table. The child had taken it in his hand "to lick it," and on hearing his mother coming had hastily dropped it. Her forceful accusations had made him confess more than he was guilty of.

The mother in question soon learned that to

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accuse her child of lying was not the best method of teaching him to tell the truth. She said later she had learned she must guide him in this art just as she guided his hand when he was learning to write. One day when she came into the house she heard her servant violently accusing the boy of taking a knob off the side-board. "You're a bad, naughty boy," the girl was saying. "You just wait till your mother comes home and you'll catch it." The child was so frightened that he was saying he hadn't taken the knob, that is, he was lying from a natural instinct of self-protection. The girl was repeating that she had seen him take it.

The mother went up to the boy quietly, soothed him and with her arms around him said, "Sonny, show me how you took the knob off and then we'll know how to put it back again. You unscrewed it like this, I suppose." She quietly took off the other knob and he readily acknowledged that was the way he had done it. So she helped him to learn the great lesson that he was capable of telling the truth under difficulties.

When children are taught arts such as drawing or piano-playing they are given exercises

to train the skill they are striving for. It is the same in the art of truth-telling. Exercises should be given that train them in the courage necessary to tell the truth.

Before any study of psychology was formulated Sir Walter Scott intuitively realized this need of children. Lockhart tells how Scott insisted that his children at a very early age should learn to ride a horse, because he believed truth-telling was the most important trait of character, and the great requisite for truth-telling was courage. Lockart tells us Scott said, "Without courage there cannot be truth; and without truth there can be no other virtue." Nowadays many forms of athletics for both boys and girls develop courage that can be applied to moral issues.

In the last analysis children lie because they have not strong enough motives for truth-telling. For lie-telling they have the instinctive selfish motives of desire for gratification or protection from fear. Instead of encouraging motives for truth-telling, parents too often merely do the negative work of punishing for untruthfulness. Severe punishments serve to increase children's fearfulness which is itself

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a motive for lying. Thus they are propelled around a vicious circle. It is far better to understand and encourage motives for truth-telling that are latent in each age of childhood.

Forbush says these motives develop in the following order. First in a young child there is only the low motive that truth-telling pays, that "honesty is the best policy." Even a very young child can understand that a lie is frowned upon while truth-telling brings praise and reward.

Later a child develops the motive of desiring to please those he loves if he sees they have high standards of truthfulness.

As a child grows older still he will have a desire to be trusted, to have everyone know his word is true.

At twelve or thirteen the motive of hero-worship may be expected to develop, either towards older boys or teachers or towards heroes of fiction and history. A child will learn to admire the truthfulness of his heroes and a desire to imitate them will grow. He will think of truthfulness as a quality of the strong and great, and lying as the part of the weak and despicable.

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Not till after years of training in knowledge of truth and courage in telling it, not till maturity is approaching, can a sense of honor be expected to develop fully, so that truth will be told from what Forbush calls the highest motive of all, the desire to keep faith in humanity. As Bernard Shaw says, "We cannot believe in honor till we have achieved it."



## CHAPTER VII

### THE SAVAGE STAGE FROM EIGHT TO TWELVE

EVERY one hears it said of certain families: "They have a son they never mention. He's just a rolling stone. They don't even know where he is." In other sad cases a daughter has been lost sight of.

Every one knows, too, another class of unfortunates: persons who, while they may be holding a respectable place in the community, are noted for an overwhelming selfishness—men and women who seem unable to recognize the rights or needs of others. These are the people of whom their neighbors say: "They never thought of anyone except themselves, and never will."

Both of these classes of people—the rolling stones who have dropped out and the successes who ignore other people's claims and rights—show the characteristics of the normal child from eight to twelve years old. In many cases these unfortunate traits persist in the grown person because they were not understood in

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childhood. Instead of having been allowed to work themselves off, they were repressed and grew in secret, to crop out overwhelmingly later on.

Many parents who desire the very best development for their children fail because they have set ideals of conduct which they try to impress on the child, just as if his mind were a blank sheet of paper on which they could write at will. On the contrary, modern psychology holds that the child's mind is far from blank. It contains much more than impressions and imitations of immediate surroundings. It is like a garden with certain seeds due to sprout at certain times following inner natural laws. The parent who does not understand these laws wastes time as foolishly as an ignoramus who tries to make his garden bloom with chrysanthemums in April and sweet peas in November.

These inner natural laws that give to the child's mind certain times and seasons for certain instincts and tastes to develop are his age-old inheritance from the entire human race that has gone before him, and beyond them from our far-away arboreal ancestors, and from eons

preceding their existence even to the beginning of animal life in the amoeba. In the few years between his birth and his manhood the child has to live through in a condensed form the mass of experience that the human race went through in its rise to civilized existence. This is according to what scientists call the theory of recapitulation.

This theory has been formulated for some time, but only in recent years have studies been made of how it works out in the life of the child from eight to twelve. Studies by G. Stanley Hall, Asher, E. B. Bryan, and others at Clark University, and by Dr. Kirkpatrick reveal these four years as “a unique period of life, with distinct characteristics of its own, entirely unlike the ages just before and just after.”

Approaching the problem from the point of view of the influence of our subconscious minds on our conscious acts, Jung and the Zurich school reach conclusions that agree with and supplement the views of the American researchers. Let us follow after the psychologists in a short survey of this period, to find out what tastes and instincts are naturally developing in

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it and how they should be dealt with.

Psychologists find that in the years from eight to twelve the child is at the stage of aggressive self-consciousness that the savage was at the time when the race had just graduated from living in trees and could walk upright, conscious of superiority over other beasts. That is why self-seeking qualities are so prominent in a child of eight who had perhaps appeared unselfish at the age of three.

“Five years ago,” said the mother of an eight-year-old boy, “Tommy was so eager to share everything! When his baby cousin was here, he would always offer her some of his supper. Now that he is eight, he snatches cookies away from her.”

In reality, Tommy was not more unselfish at the age of three than at eight. As Kirkpatrick shows, the child of three has no clear perception of himself as a separate individuality. In his second and third years he only partially distinguishes himself in consciousness from others. He does and feels as others around him do, and sometimes seems equally well pleased, whether he or someone else does a thing or gets a thing. In other words, Tommy's

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unselfishness in offering to give away his dinner was only a charming appearance of unselfishness, since he did not consciously realize that to give to another meant to deprive himself. Just as the race gradually came up from the unconsciousness of the amoeba existence, so in his fourth and fifth years the child becomes more conscious of his own personality, and by the time he reaches the eighth year the appearance of unselfishness has disappeared and he wants to get all good things for himself. Gain to self is now the all-powerful motive back of all his conduct, and should be clearly recognized and appealed to.

Gain to self was the all-powerful motive that enabled the race to struggle up to civilization. Self-seeking is just as necessary a preparation for every individual's higher development as it was for the savage. Dr. Kirkpatrick says, "The extreme egoism or selfishness of the child is not to be deprecated, for it is an important and valuable phase of development. The usefulness of every individual depends upon what he is, the knowledge and power that he possesses and the use he makes of them. It is therefore necessary that the first law of life

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should be one impelling to self-enlargement and development. If the law of service to others were the dominant one early in life, there would never be a self capable of efficient service."

The time for the powers of altruism to develop comes later. We must not despair if the child is as self-seeking during the years from eight to twelve as was the savage who had to struggle for himself alone in order to survive.

Desire for gain to self is by no means the only way in which the child of this age resembles the savage, as we shall see in a short survey of the psychologists' studies of this period. The child's personality is organized on a simple plan, with few but strongly developed traits. And those traits are like those of the remote ancestors of the race. The senses are keen and alert, and memory is good. Reason, sympathy, true morality, love, and esthetic enjoyment are but slightly developed. Insight, understanding, and sentiment are only just beginning to grow. The child of this age is as incapable as a savage of holding steadfast ideals of conduct. The story of the boy Washington cutting down the cherry tree will hold the interest, but the boy Washington who



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could not tell a lie will rarely become a constant ideal before the teens are reached.

Physically, the child of this age has the extreme hardness of the savage. The acute stage of the first teething is over, the less difficult second teething is passing. Health is at its best. Activity is greater than it ever was before or ever will be again, in spite of the fact that the annual body growth is greater now than at any time except during the first year of life. The great danger of the gastro-enteric diseases of infancy is past, the danger of contagious children's diseases is passing.

The brain, which has been growing at a tremendous rate, has at eight years reached nearly the adult size and weight, but its development is what Sir James Chrichton-Browne calls "spotty"; that is, the brain centers have developed, but the connecting paths between them must still be made.

At the latter part of this stage, boys and girls are more nearly alike than at any other time.

Even the schools of Freud and Jung, which hold that sex develops in infancy and early childhood, recognize these years from eight to



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twelve as a time when ideas and feelings of sex are latent.

So we have the picture of these hardy, undeveloped little beings, self-seeking and without powers of altruism. Jung and the Zurich school hold that the child's subconscious mind is largely the product of racial experience. He believes the subconsciousness is made up, not only of suppressed desires and childish memories, as Freud holds, but that it also contains all our racial memories. Jung calls these old phyletic memories and deeply ingrained impulses an *absolute* subconsciousness. Whether this view is accepted or not, it must be admitted that the child's conscious tastes at this age show his inheritance from his savage ancestors.

A study made by R. A. Asher at Clark University, through questionnaires to teachers, shows how similar children's spontaneous activities are to the necessary occupations of the savage's life. Here are a few examples:

Children delight in digging caves or constructing primitive huts and shanties. Of course, the instinct to provide shelter is inherent in the race, and in its early days resulted

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in dwellings not unlike those made by children of today. The same instinct shows in the child's love of constructing things of snow — tunnels, caves, forts, and the like, an interest that ceases about the thirteenth year.

Children's love for string is like that of the primitive races. Girls braid string or straw and use it to decorate themselves and their dolls, and for games and puzzles. Boys use it for harness, whips, fish-nets, bows, or belts for machines, and for games and puzzles, too. Primitive peoples not only make much use of string as an implement in their daily lives, but also employ it in ceremonies, religious and magic. All over the world, strings, cords, and knots enter largely into magical practices. Our common child's game of cat's cradle has been found, in some form, in nearly every primitive tribe of the world today, and is also known to most civilized people. It has been found in Korea, Japan, the East Indian Archipelago, Australia, Africa, western Asia, among the Eskimos, American Indians in both North and South America, and the people of western Europe. No fewer than ninety-seven varieties of this game are known to the world, undoubt-

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edly as an inheritance from our savage ancestors.

Another marked resemblance between the child and the savage is the use by both of instruments with point and edge—pocket-knives, scissors, arrows, and the like. Things with point and edges were tremendous factors in man's early evolution. When he came down from the trees and learned the use of his hands for purposes other than walking and clinging, he made crude weapons with points and edges. By the use of them the tribe became almost invincible, killing the beasts that preyed on them, enlarging their food-supply and their territory.

Asher points out that in the complex world of today, with its myriad inventions, it is hard to realize that eons ago it was the use of these simple weapons of point and edge that enabled man to survive. The savage taste for them is relived from eight to twelve, boys caring more for knives and arrows, and girls for scissors.

Children's enthusiasm for striking and throwing also harks back to the race's savage past.

In their love for bright colors and barbaric adornment, children again show the tastes of those primitive ancestors whose love for beads

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and rings is duplicated by existing savages, as every trader among them knows. The awakened sense of self demands adornment in the child no less than in the savage, and it might be added that in both this taste is frequently combined with slight care for personal cleanliness.

Children's love of going bare-footed and bare-headed and their delight in outdoor expeditions also recall their savage ancestors. If the world had not progressed from savagery through barbarism to modern civilization, parents could leave the little savages just as they are—turn them out and let them shift for themselves. In a favorable climate they could be self-sufficient. According to G. Stanley Hall, everything in this stage of childhood suggests that this period may represent to the individual what was once an age of maturity for the remote ancestors of the race. They were probably pygmies who had their full growth early and shifted for themselves independent of parental aid, just as the young of most animals do now.

Remnants of this condition are found today among primitive peoples who have not kept up

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with the march of civilization. Chamberlain finds that in Tahiti the ease with which food can be obtained allows children to be practically free from parental control in their eighth year and to set up a sort of group life by themselves. Among the Athka Aleuts the boy is an independent hunter at ten and may marry; the boy of the Bismarck Archipelago who goes out with his father very early knows as much as the parent does by his tenth or twelfth year. Many more examples from all over the world could be cited.

But today in civilized countries the child must gradually learn to adjust himself to all kinds of complicated conditions that require stores of knowledge and powers of reason; he must also learn to take his place in a world that has acquired a sense of the rights of others and ideals of altruistic service, however short it may come of living up to them. So the period of childhood has necessarily been increased to give more preparation for living in a complex environment.

How can these years from eight to twelve best be utilized to help the child outgrow his savage traits, and to prepare him for entrance

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through adolescence to his birthright of civilization?

Ideally speaking, the savage traits should be given full sway in order to work themselves out. Rousseau advocated letting the child live in "a state of nature" up to twelve years of age. G. Stanley Hall says biological psychology finds many good reasons to confirm this view, *if only a proper environment could be provided*. He advocates the turning out to savagery at this age on the old Aristotelian principle that a little renders immune to much. He feels that if only the savage proclivities could be indulged in the country, "rudimentary organs of the soul, now suppressed, perverted, or delayed, to crop out in menacing forms later, would be developed in this season, so that we should be immune to them later on." How much better to be allowed to be a bit of a vagabond from eight to twelve than to have such instincts repressed, to survive in much stronger forms in later life! Frequently the parents who have made their children "little ladies and gentlemen" at this age are horrified to have them develop into the vagrants of later life.

But under modern conditions, particularly in



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cities, it is impossible to give full scope to the child's savage tastes for roaming, hunting, fishing, digging, and the like. G. Stanley Hall points to some substitutes. "When he cannot live in a state of nature, he must be perpetually incited to visit field, forest, hill, shore, flowers, and animals, the true homes of childhood at this savage stage from which civilization has kidnapped and transported him."

In this realm he can learn a great deal unconsciously under the tutelage of what Kirkpatrick prettily calls "Dame Nature's jolly old Nurse, Play, who charms children into using every power as it develops and finding out everything possible about their environment from the heaven above to the earth beneath." His love of savage outdoor environment may be utilized, too, in nature study, which will give him knowledge helpful and interesting to him when he takes his place in the civilized world.

Hall also recommends that the children's savage instincts should have a chance for partial realization through hearing tales from literature, history, and tradition that present the crude and primitive virtues of the heroes of the world's childhood. "In this way, aided by his



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vivid visual imagination, the child may enter upon his heritage from the past, live out each stage of life to the fullest, and realize in himself all its manifest tendencies."

To children these are the easiest parts of education at this age, for their spontaneous interest in anything approximating a savage background is bubbling over. The problem of the parent or teacher is not so much in the children themselves as in making environment replace the natural savage background as far as possible.

Another side of education that should be given at this time, if the inner laws of development are to be taken advantage of, is frequently not so pleasant for the child. Psychologists find that the power of memory natural to children at this age makes it easy for them to assimilate knowledge necessary in civilization, and that they will do so most enthusiastically if knowledge is presented to them with motives for learning it. They have a vivid interest in knowledge that is really related to life as they know it. The school-house in which learning is usually crammed into children at this age seems a far cry from the de-

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sirable "state of nature." The drill and discipline of the old-fashioned school are particularly difficult at this age, and accordingly the modern trend is toward the greatest possible freedom. Yet the necessity remains for taking advantage of the native powers of storing up wisdom. Dr. G. Stanley Hall puts the problem in a nutshell:

"The wisest requirements seem to the child more or less alien, arbitrary, artificial. There is much passivity, often active resistance and evasion, and perhaps spasms of obstinacy to it all. But the senses are keen and alert, reactions immediate and vigorous, and the memory is quick, sure, and lasting."

Fortunately, educators are beginning to realize the child's needs at this age. Progressive teachers who follow Professor John Dewey's philosophy of education believe that the greater part of school work should be looked upon not so much as studies as active pursuits, as the natural ways by which learning takes place, through constructing, investigating, observing, experimenting, rather than through mere memorizing. So, in many modern schools, children are given opportunity to

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acquire their learning in these natural ways, just as savages slowly acquired the arts of civilization.

Formerly the recapitulation theory, if recognized at all, was very narrowly applied to children at the savage age. It was thought that the child must go slowly through each stage of culture that the race had experienced. He must first learn about isolated savages, then about tribal, and finally about community life, learning through the literature of each stage in succession. This culture-epoch theory, as it was called, has now been discarded by modern educators. They have found that children can learn to take their places in civilization more directly, without first learning the life of the various by-gone stages. A child can successfully learn at an early age that modern civilization is based on cooperation in working and in living.

For merely to let the child work off his savage instincts, with the addition of some drilled-in knowledge for which his powers of memory make him fit, is not enough. The child will not be ready to take his place in a civilized world till his savage spirit of gain to self has been

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replaced with a broader outlook that recognizes the rights of others, and includes power to control himself accordingly. We have seen that the seeds of altruism cannot be expected to sprout till adolescence, so that it is useless to appeal to unselfish motives during this period. But if the child savage is allowed always to act in accordance with his self-seeking motives, his selfish habits will grow to be heavy stones that will impede the sprouting of the seeds of altruism later on.

So we have the paradox that the child savage must form the habit of acting unselfishly from selfish motives. This may sound impossible. But consider Tommy, who snatched cookies from his little cousin. If such actions are invariably followed by punishment, he will soon find that he gains more for himself by refraining from taking the cookie and thus avoiding the unpleasant results that follow snatching. His motive will be the wholly selfish one of avoiding what is disagreeable to him. When he has acted fairly to his cousin's rights for a while from this motive, a somewhat higher one will gradually grow up, the desire for praise for acting in a grown-up, kindly manner. While

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this is by no means an unselfish motive, it is a little more civilized than the mere desire to avoid painful consequences. Still later Tommy may continue the habit of recognizing the rights of others through a genuine feeling of brotherhood.

Kirkpatrick's general rule is that right action in this preparatory stage of moral development is more important than right motive. If appeal to a high motive is not effective, a proper action may be secured through an appeal to a lower motive; but the highest motive that will obtain right conduct should always be appealed to. The mere forming of right habits of conduct is a very helpful thing. "If children are forced, without arousing too much antagonism on their part, to do as they should for a sufficient length of time, the tendency to act in that way becomes greater than the tendency to act in any other way."

So the gradual moral advancement of the child toward standards of civilization may be measured by the substitution of higher for lower motives, just as the substitution of lower for higher motives measures degradation. A man who votes his party ticket for money in-

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stead of from conviction is demoralized; but if one year he voted it for money and the next because he believed in his party's platform, he would be advancing.

E. B. Bryan points out that in forming the civilized habit of including others in his ideas, rather than thinking of himself alone, the child's play forms a great part. At this age it has grown from aimless to competitive. The child of eight has yet to develop interest in abstract standards of breaking records. Beating the other fellow is what appeals to him now. This competitive instinct should be developed from competition between individuals to that among groups, teams, and classes. Just as the self-seeking cave-man developed into a member of an organized tribe, so the child learns to work with others for the good of his team or class. At the beginning of these four years it is extremely difficult for children to work together, so strong is the individualistic instinct. Bryan puts it like this: "At first the captain of a team will hardly be able to hold his men together long enough for a single game: a bruised finger, a bad start, an imaginary slight to a prominent member, and the



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team suddenly breaks up.” At the end of these four years there is growth in cooperation. Teams stay intact all season, and do not disband because the pitcher has an off day. Similarly, at the beginning of these four years girls have clubs of unstable organization, but when about twelve years old they can work together more cooperatively in getting up fairs, plays, and the like.

To act in a way that recognizes the rights of others even in play involves control of self, of the savage proclivities. Kirkpatrick points out that parents should lay a basis for self-control, even before these four years, through the formation of regular habits of eating, sleeping, and eliminating waste materials.

One last word of encouragement for the parents of these little latter-day savages. Though they may at times despair of their children's conduct, they must always remember that actions at this stage do not necessarily indicate the characteristics that will probably be developed in a few more years. A mother who had struggled for nearly thirteen years to make her boy wash his face and hands before his meals told me of her immense surprise and



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satisfaction when he announced to her one day: "Mother, you don't need to *make* me wash any more. I've decided I like to be clean."

Similarly, other savage traits besides uncleanliness will be thrown off and replaced by civilized ones. If they have understood and managed their children properly during these preparatory years, the parents of little savages can look forward to the dawning of adolescence, when, with the awakening of the parental instinct, children gradually throw off the traits that hark back to our savage past, and slowly acquire the newer acquisitions of the race, the traits of civilization. To the little savage, as G. Stanley Hall says, "adolescence is a new birth, for the high and more completely human traits are now born."

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE KNOW-IT-ALL AGE

**A**T THE bottom of a Christmas list of gifts she wanted a girl of thirteen wrote, "No books, please, as I have read all the good books in the world."

Oh, supreme all-knowledge of those early teens! Never again in all their lives will boys and girls feel that they know so much.

If anyone were to tell the average parent of today that the know-it-all stage of youth is one of the most promising assurances of mental growth and character development, the statement would probably be received as a grotesque irony. Yet the fact would be advanced in all seriousness. Recent psychological investigation has raised this age of youthful omniscience out of its traditional buffoonery into a sphere where it demands the dignity of scientific consideration.

This know-it-all phase of early adolescence has been the most puzzling, and, in many ways, the most misunderstood period of the growing

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child. Most parents, men and women of understanding and a genuine desire to strive for the best in their children, look upon the know-it-all symptoms as an attack of mental measles which they must endure as best they may. Its only value, they feel, lies in the probable immunity from a second attack. The only possible treatment they have to suggest, when the child is too old for the counter-irritant of a birch switch, is the substitution of homeopathic doses of ridicule. Intolerance is met with intolerance. As one psychologist recently put it: "The know-it-all stage of the child is countered with the damn-it-all stage of the parent. Mutual antagonism grows up. The roots of early misunderstanding are deeply planted, and secretly nurtured. There results a general bedevilment of what had but recently been a charming and mutually helpful relation."

It is a struggle older than the human race itself. And because it has always been with us, most parents are quite content to bungle along through it, making adjustments and compromises where they can, and finally, giving over the whole matter to an endurance test of patience. It is this very acceptance of ado-

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lescent omniscience as an evil albeit a necessary one which the new psychology now challenges in no uncertain voice. Say the psychologists, "This early struggle between the generations is necessary to the making of a well-balanced individual, and to the development of a normal race. This struggle between age and youth is not, as formally considered, an impediment to human relations and human progress. It is as normal as the advent of second teeth, as useful and as inevitable. The privilege of the parent is to understand it and use it to the best of his intelligence."

It is to the furtherance of this understanding that the psychologists have opened up the field of exploration.

Briefly, I shall try to follow the order of their procedure. The first approach to the adolescent know-it-all is through the physical life of the child. Modern psychology and physiology are twin sciences born of the same mother, nurtured at identical breasts. No parent can hope to grasp the significance of the mental functions of adolescence without first making an intelligent study of the physical conditions of that age. There are volumes devoted to its

physiological aspects of which only a brief indication can be given here.

From twelve years of age on it becomes more difficult to speak in generalities of the characteristics of children. During adolescence there are not only greater differences between the sexes than before, but the possibility of variation between children of the same sex is at its height.

It is a general truth, however, that at puberty both boys and girls enter a period of most rapid bodily growth. Dr. G. Stanley Hall considers the annual rate of growth in height, weight and strength is increased, and often doubled, and even more. Although the death rate is the lowest at this age, both boys and girls tend to be sickly with minor ailments. The energy vibrates between the height of activity and great lassitude. Readjustments are going on through the whole vasomotor system. The ductless or endocrine glands whose importance to both physical and mental health is becoming more and more understood, are growing rapidly at this time.

The growth of the body during the early adolescent years is not symmetrical, but as Dr.

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G. Stanley Hall says, "To some extent the parts, functions and organs grow in succession so that the exact normal proportions of the body are temporarily lost, to be regained later on a new plan. The mind now grows in like manner."

During these years of a child's growth many a parent worries over the temporary over-development of the nose, mouth, feet, and hands. Such basic physical demonstrations of adolescence, which are apparent to the most casual observer simply mark the parallel manifestations in the mental growth of the child. And it is to this mental change that the parent comes with an almost complete bewilderment.

One difficulty is that of his mental state during his own know-it-all stage, the parent, like most other adults including psychologists, usually has less memory than of any other period of life. This gap comes because intense feelings cannot be well remembered. Youth is a period of storm and stress, of "spiritual drunkenness" as Plato said. Its emotions are so contradictory as to be mutually destructive and soon lost to memory. There have been cases where a grown person who found the over-

emotionality of young people absolutely incomprehensible was astounded in looking over his boyhood diaries to find his own youth had held equally extravagant feelings which he had completely forgotten.

Just as each grown person can recall little of the storm and stress of his own early teens, so the race has lost consciousness of what G. Stanley Hall calls "the heat and ferment of its growth." From pictures carved in stone, from remains of prehistoric weapons and implements, and from the lives of the few primitive peoples left in the world today, psychologists can study the race's savage past and from it throw great light on the child during the years from eight to twelve during which he relives the race's savage stage. Of the racial periods corresponding to adolescence, of the slow turmoil of soul during which brute became man, savage grew civilized, no pictures nor records could be made, so in vain psychologists look to our racial past for understanding of the know-it-all age.

The great light which psychologists throw on the child's mental attitude in the early teens comes first from studying the behavior of hun-



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dreds of boys and girls with a view to generalizing their motives; and second, from psychoanalysis, the peering into the unconscious mind of both normal and abnormal children with a view to discovering what the normal consists of.

The first help that studies of children's behavior offer is a demonstration of the natural steps leading children to a disillusionment with the parents that is commonly at its height in the early teens.

In infancy and early childhood the child's mind grasps at some vague understanding of the people around him, usually his own parents. These make his world and these he imitates. In them he thinks all knowledge and power reside. As Earl Barnes says, "The child of three regards his parents as all-knowing and gravely asks them who God is and why flowers grow." Later he takes in more and more personalities, other members of his family, playmates and teachers. He discovers there are things his parents do not know. Surprisingly he makes the second discovery that some things his parents are ignorant of, other people know all about. So as a natural reaction from his earlier over-estimation of his parents' knowl-

edge he now underestimates them. Naturally this belittling of the parents' worth reaches its peak in the early teens when boys and girls first feel they have outgrown childhood and become men and women, the equal of their fathers and mothers or of any others.

Psychologists have shown the gradual growth of preferring outside authority to that of the parents by numerous interesting questionnaires. For instance, two hundred school children were asked what they would do in a specific case of conflict between teacher and parents. The great majority of young children in the primary grades wrote that they would side with their parents, while the great majority of older children said they would side with the teacher.

A concrete example of the child's gradual sensing and preferring of authority other than the parents' is the conduct in asking advice of two sisters I know. Until they were almost entering the teens Jane and Mary would each consult their mother as to whether "she looked right." Then instead of asking her mother Mary began to consult Jane as to whether her skirt hung straight, and Jane would ask Mary

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if her hair-ribbon were at just the right perky angle. In another year each child discarded her sister's opinion to a great extent in favor of what the girls at school did and what the teacher preferred.

The gradual disillusionment with parents and other relatives is also shown by questionnaires asking children whom they wish to be like when they grow up. Data of this sort has been collected by Taylor, Young, Hamilton, Chambers, Earl Barnes and others. It was found that from six to eleven or twelve the number of children who chose their ideals among their acquaintance falls off rapidly. The boy of six wants to be like Daddy or Uncle Tom, at eight or nine he prefers the garage man or corner policeman as his ideal, while at twelve or thirteen he names General Pershing or Abraham Lincoln. The great majority of adolescents choose historical characters or contemporaries outside their own homes.

Freud has shown that it is a very dangerous thing for a child *not* to go through this normal disillusionment with his parents, but to submit passively to them instead. Such a child has usually been too much with his parents and too

little with other people. As a result he will rarely assert himself, go out into the world, marry and lead a normal life. There is grave danger that he will always remain as helpless as a child in making decisions for himself and even develop ultimately into a neurotic or insane person. So we see that the normal, gradual disillusionment with the parents' authority is of great value as an aid to boys and girls in "the great task of outgrowing the parents' dominance."

If we look more closely at the young know-it-alls we see that their preference for new authority is but a part of their absorbing interest in the new and unknown in every phase of life. What Dr. Hall calls the three feeling instincts are now developing and pushing the child's interest out into broader fields. These instincts are the awakening love of the other sex, love of nature and religious impressionability.

The awakening love of the other sex is much more apparent than are the other two instincts. Yet we know that the young child notices in nature only the beauty of small concrete things such as butterflies and flowers. The adolescent

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is impressionable to wide horizons, mountains, the sea, and vast open spaces. He dreams of such aspects of nature even though he has never seen them. I know a boy of thirteen who had never been west of New England, yet who, in the barn of his Connecticut home, splashed on a big piece of wrapping paper a picture which he called, "The Feeling of Being on a Western Plain."

Just as the new feeling for nature pushes the thoughts to faraway places, so the new interest in the other sex and the increased religious impressionability both lead boys and girls towards unknown emotions. School compositions give typical examples. If children in their early teens are allowed to choose their subjects they rarely write of anything in their own comparatively humdrum experience. A typical choice of subject at this age is a fifteen-year-old girl's theme about a mother who heroically played an Ave Maria on her violin to assuage the dying pangs of a beloved child. The ambitious young author had never played the violin and had never seen a mother with a dying child; yet the subject held absorbing interest for her.

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It may be that the mind requires large space to grow as well as the body. G. Stanley Hall says, "There seems to be a biological law that animals require a certain range, and are injured by restriction. Young, in 1885, showed that, other conditions being constant and within considerable limits, the larger the vessel in which tadpoles were reared, the larger they grew. Insular animals, too, are usually smaller than those reared on a continent, and smaller trout are usually found in smaller streams."

Keeping pace with his new powers of grasping more and more personalities and soaring in spirit over greater and greater areas of space and feeling, the child's sense of his own personality has been growing keener and keener. In babyhood he only partially distinguished himself in consciousness from those around him. In his early teens he has arrived at a most delicately attuned sense of self. He has a paramount absorption in his own personality which is now constantly changing, and sprouting new, surprising shoots.

Perhaps all this seems to get us no nearer an understanding of the most perplexing quality of the know-it-all age, the child's obstinate



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desire to decide his own conduct, and frequently to choose entirely different activities from those his parents wish. But if we look more closely at the child's two compelling interests, his absorption in his own changing personality, and the attraction for him of the new and faraway in space and experience, we can see how these two interests combine to set his steps upon a path of conduct which he must inevitably follow if he is ever to find himself. His inner urge is constantly to test his own strange, new personality and the tests he gets himself are made from his newly sensed ideas and ideals. As G. Stanley Hall puts it: "Youth's expansion of ideals gives a new sense of passing some kind of unwritten examination in the world's school, and a new rivalry to stand high and not low upon some of these new and lengthening scales."

The tests that boys and girls set themselves are not unlike the strange trials of skill and daring through which young savages were initiated to full membership in their tribe.

On the one hand a youth is inwardly questioning how the way he wears his hair impresses his girl acquaintances or, above all,



some one particular girl; on the other hand he is secretly asking himself how he would compare with the world's heroes of religion and history if he were put through great tests of skill and daring. With utter contempt for the humdrum everyday virtues youth is constantly trying to find tests for himself, grasping at all sorts of new and strange experiences which to his parents seem useless or even dangerous, unless they realize he is not seeking these things as much for their own sakes as to search out and measure himself through them. Naturally these boy and girl aspirants to great, heroic qualities are irritated when their parents seem narrowly insistent on such petty matters as punctuality, thoroughness in school work and good manners.

Of course, these young know-it-alls do not admit to their parents that they are testing themselves for much higher qualities of strength and daring than everyday virtues. To the parents they merely present a cock-sure appearance that the home ideals for them are all wrong. So the door to an understanding of what the child is really trying to do is fast locked unless parents grasp what Tanner calls

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the key to adolescence. This key can be given in one short sentence, summing up all that has already been said about the motives of young know-it-alls. "The key to the adolescent is his interest in living up to what he conceives to be the world's demands upon himself."

The puzzled parent who holds fast to this key can unlock a secret chamber of the soul where the child hides the reason for many of his well-nigh unaccountable actions.

A possible objection to this key is that the adolescent's interest in living up to what he conceives are the world's demands upon him seems to coincide with what his parents are striving for, too. All the average parents want is for their child to live up to the world's demands upon him, that is, to acquire the learning and assume the responsibilities necessary to take his place in a civilized world. Then why is there so much friction between child and parents?

The reason is that the parents' idea of what the world demands from their children, is formed from knowledge and experience, while the child, lacking experience of life, gets his idea from imagination and from friends as in-

experienced as himself. As yet the child has little sense of proportion to show him what are the important things among the world's numerous demands upon him. So naturally he overestimates unimportant things and draws many ridiculous conclusions.

The half-grown boy may feel he has utterly failed in living up to his ideals if he has awkwardly dropped a plate when out in the company of critical young friends. He may brood over this trifling mishap and be oblivious to more important failures, such as lack of thoughtfulness to his family or application to his school work.

The attitude of some public school children towards the inmates of an orphan asylum well illustrates the widely differing point of view from which children and grown-ups form their judgments. The question of taking the older orphans from the ungraded school of the asylum and of putting them in the public school had long been agitated but not decided upon, as the directors of the institution were afraid that the school children would look down upon the orphans as paupers, public charges. The women thought the children would have the

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grown-up point of view of judging by financial standards. Greatly to the directors' surprise the school children from normal homes regarded the asylum boys and girls with admiration and envy. To them this select body of children seemed to be living their own lives freely as if in a club without father or mother to say them nay. From such widely varying experience and standards children and grown-ups form their judgments.

So we come to the secret of the child's unconscious mind that psychoanalysis offers us. The modern child psychologist is able to set aside the young know-it-all's braggadocio as if lifting a curtain, and so to reveal the holy of holies where his inmost secret is hidden, *the stinging sense of his own inferiority*. This sense of inferiority is now regarded by many psychologists as the inmost characteristic of childhood. Many of the mental maladjustments of later life are now traced to the parents' clumsy handling that turns this tender, super-sensitive trait into a swollen abnormality.

That a stinging sense of inferiority can be at the base of the know-it-all age seems at first a contradiction. Yet it is easy to see that a

sense of inferiority is the inherent motive of a youth's constant desire to test himself, to live up to what he considers are the world's demands upon him. No one whose superiority is proven needs constantly to test himself. With his powers of observation and intuitional understanding of the soul of youth G. Stanley Hall recognized this hidden sense of inferiority which the mechanism of psychoanalysis lays more fully bare. "The same youth," says Hall, "with all his brazen effrontery may feel a distrust of self which all his bravado is needed to hide. He doubts his own powers, is perilously anxious about the future, his self-love is wounded and humiliated in innumerable ways keenly felt, perhaps at heart resented, but with a feeling of importance to resist."

Dr. Alfred A. Adler, the Viennese psychoanalyst, offers an explanation of why all children naturally have a keen sense of their own inferiority. Around them they see grown-ups who are superior to them in all their powers. In civilized homes the child is surrounded with a thousand objects, not one of which he could make himself. Everybody and everything around him emphasizes his weakness, his igno-

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rance, in a word, his inferiority. The child constantly draws comparisons between himself and others, at first with his father as the strongest of the family physically, later with others with whom he comes in contact. Upon close analysis it is found that all children, both the normal and the neurotic, have made a careful estimate of their own worth, and found themselves far inferior to what they would like to be. Gradually all children become guided by the desire to become great and strong. Deep down in their unconsciousness is the will to overcome their sense of inferiority.

If the child's sense of inferiority is not exaggerated, if it alternates with or is cloaked by a sense of superiority, he gradually moulds the weakness and ignorance of childhood into the strength and knowledge of the normal adult. Those who wish to study the inferiority complex further will find that in Jung's view one of the universal complexes common to all normal individuals is an ego-complex in which a sense of inferiority is balanced by a sense of superiority. Tansley finds this view not incompatible with MacDougal's classification of the basic instincts in which the instinct of self-



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assertion is balanced by that of self-abasement.

In some remarkable cases a more than average childish weakness is with the help of a sense of superiority developed into a quality of great strength. The classical example is Demosthenes, who as a boy was a stutterer, yet who made himself into a great orator. In our own times we know Theodore Roosevelt was physically weak as a child, yet developed into a rough-rider, explorer and forceful statesman.

Cases where such actual physical inferiorities are so successfully overcome are rare. Only too often the child who is constitutionally weak or merely born unattractive, develops an exaggerated sense of inferiority. Adler calls such children "predisposed neurotics," defining a neurotic as one who carries his sense of inferiority always with him. He also maintains that other children with no disabilities are made into predisposed neurotics by the parents' maltreatment of their immature, innate sense of inferiority. If a youth is neglected or too strictly treated so that his normal inferiority is constantly emphasized he develops an exaggerated sense of it. If, on the other hand, a child is too much pampered by his parents his



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sense of inferiority will be painfully over-emphasized when he is out in the world with other people who do not spoil him. So Adler puts both the too strictly reared and the too much pampered child in the class with the constitutionally inferior child, calling them all "predisposed neurotics whose sense of inferiority in comparison to others is exaggerated."

It is easy to see that the know-it-all age is a normal aid to outgrowing the sense of inferiority, by giving the child confidence that he can mould his weakness into strength, his ignorance into knowledge. In the growth of a plant there come first the false leaves which wither away as the true leaves appear. Even so a false sense of knowing-it-all must grow in the child before a superiority based on true strength and knowledge can develop.

What a child might become without the normal help of the know-it-all age we see in the fully-developed neurotic who has no hope that he can ever overcome his inferiority. Gradually he adopts some fictitious method of making himself feel superior, some guiding fetich. Little by little his whole life becomes a struggle to bolster up his sense of superiority by this

fictitious means which gradually leads him away from reality into insanity.

According to Adler the obsessions and delusions of every type of insanity are all alike based on this struggle to overcome an exaggerated sense of inferiority. A few examples will explain his view of the guiding motive of the insane. The exaggerated egotism of one type of insane person is really an attempt to overcome an exaggerated sense of inferiority by imagining oneself to be Napoleon or some other great, powerful person. Similarly in religious mania the sense of inferiority is bolstered up by supposing oneself to be in communication with the deity on a higher plane than mere ordinary mortals. Not infrequently the neurotic will go to the other extreme and try to become superior through weakness. He will imagine himself ill till his invalidism becomes real and makes the entire household slaves to do his bidding. Thus he feels superior to them. In other types of delusion the neurotic bolsters up his sense of inferiority by imagining himself to be the center of plots directed against him. He feels himself the object of interest, the important one against whom others are

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scheming. These are but a few of the manifold ways in which the neurotic tries to compensate for his exaggerated sense of inferiority.

So now with some idea of the nature and use of the know-it-all age we come to the question of what practical advice psychologists can give parents as to their treatment of it. Hall warns against curbing young know-it-alls too strongly or making them live too much by rote and rule. He tells us their trait of self-confidence is also a quality of genius. He thinks the best definition of genius is "intensified and prolonged adolescence to which excessive and premature systemization is fatal." Because in some respects "early adolescence is the infancy of man's higher nature when he receives from the great all-mother his last capital of energy and evolutionary momentum, the parent and teacher must understand that mother nature has again taken her child upon her knee and must stand off a little to see and make room for her more perfect education. . . . This should be a period of freedom that leans a little to license before the human colt is haltered and broken to any of the harnesses of severe discipline."

Instead of being arbitrarily given orders the child should now have a voice in making decisions for himself. Direct control by the parent is almost impossible of success. The way to control him lies in Tanner's key to adolescence. The child is trying to live up to what he considers to be the world's demands upon him. His ideas as to what those demands are come largely from his associates outside his own home. So wise parents can exercise control indirectly by seeing that their child is thrown with children and teachers whose ideas most nearly correspond with their own. Just as the problem of the savage stage is not so much in the child himself as in finding a suitable physical environment for him, so the problem of this stage is to find the proper social environment. Once the right associates are found, parents may wisely "give their child his head" with less direction than ever before.

Let us hope that more and more parents will agree with Miss Jane Addams that "the most precious moment of human development is the young creature's assertion that he is unlike any other human being and has an individual contribution to make to the world."

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As with the individual so with the race. Each oncoming generation naturally feels that it can accomplish things its predecessors never attempted. Does it not seem possible that increasing understanding of the know-it-all stage of youth may lessen the friction between the generations and make more easy the passing on of the tested wisdom of the older to the new energy of the younger generation? If this pooling of powers could be increased, one of the great impediments to human progress would be removed.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE PROBLEM OF THE ADOLESCENT GIRL

THE problems of childhood are the problems of both boys and girls. In behavior and in viewpoint the two sexes do not differ widely up to the age of twelve, and in the modern mode of upbringing little difference is made in their régime at home or at school up to that age. From twelve on both boys and girls show the "know-it-all" symptoms, based on a sense of inferiority. In other respects the emotional problems of girls from twelve to twenty are very different and infinitely more difficult than those of boys.

At the stage when the young girl is entering womanhood her outward aspect is so engaging that there has always been a tendency to interpret her soul from her looks, to consider her as a bud beautifully and naturally coming into flower in the dawning sun of life. Dr. G. Stanley Hall calls attention to the popularity of Heine's poem, *Du bist wie eine Blume*, in which a young girl is likened to a flower. It has

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been set to music no less than two hundred times and translated into many languages. But if only the charming outward aspect of the young girl is regarded the viewpoint narrows into sentimentality. There is another side of the picture that must be faced. This lovely budding season is the most critical of the young girl's life. If as a young child she has had any slight neurosis there is great danger of its re-appearance in much more serious form in the early teens. Recent psychological and medical studies show that the outbreak of the graver forms of hysteria and of dementia praecox, one of the worst forms of insanity, is coincident with the beginning of womanhood. The strange cases of dissociated personality usually begin during young girlhood. The greatest number of spiritualistic mediums are women who first began their psychic experiences as young girls. In almost all cases of popular delusion from witchcraft in the sixteenth century to New York's poisoned needle scare a decade ago, the deluded evidence of young girls is the starting point. We know the "flapper" to be more capable than any other individual of telling pathological lies, lies that to her seem true.



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From such abnormal manifestations, which are happily comparatively rare, the behavior of adolescent girls grades down to a host of minor peculiarities. Even the most normal of young girls is apt in her teens to display all manner of inconsistencies, fads, finickiness and fancies. With slight provocation her emotions range easily and rapidly from giggles to tears. Whatever poise of manner she had before may change now into a repellent boldness or a shrinking shyness. Few of her family or friends understand her at this age. Least of all does she understand herself. For she has suddenly become a different being from her old childish self.

The new psychology interprets all the peculiar behavior of adolescent girls as the outward manifestations of emotional tension. In extreme cases, especially where a girl has inherited a neurotic tendency this tension leads to insanity. The problem that is called the adolescent conflict is the cause of this dangerous tension. Every girl has to go through this conflict so a true understanding of the adolescent conflict and of its ideal solution is of the greatest help, not only to parents of adolescent

girls but to the girls themselves. Misrepresentations of the nature of this conflict are frequently all that a girl can learn on the subject. The Dean of Women of one of our largest Universities told me she considered one of the most harmful influences for the two thousand girls under her was the false understanding of the adolescent conflict as popularized in cheap fiction and in pseudo-scientific magazine articles of a yellow cast.

What is the true nature of this problem that causes such tension in every young girl, this conflict that under ideal conditions she may solve with normal poise, but which under other conditions may place her in the ranks of nervous invalids? It is the problem of understanding herself and her place in the world.

Consider the mental and emotional furnishings of the young girl who is entering her teens. We have seen that up to twelve they are not greatly different from a boy's. Recent psychological studies show that boys and girls are not only alike but they look forward to a similar future. No less than eight separate British and American studies of children's ideals from the age of ten to the early teens show that girls

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take men as their ideals. They do not look forward to being like some of the great women they have studied about, such as Joan of Arc, Rosa Bonheur, Florence Nightingale, or Harriet Beecher Stowe. Strangely enough they tend to give great men as their ideals. They have little realization before their teens that their future places in the world will be very different from those of men. Then at pubescence come a few years when girls grow rapidly and mature quickly. For the first time the growing girl keenly feels the physical handicaps of her sex. She realizes now that her makeup is different from that of boys, that her future place in the world must undoubtedly be different from that of men. For the first time, too, she finds herself under more conventional restraint than her own brother or other boys of her age. Her rebellion is frequently the more bitter because she has no understanding of why she should be more carefully protected than boys.

In some cases the young girl's rebellion at her femininity takes the extreme form of wishing nothing to do with girls, of wanting to be only with boys. Girls are sometimes thought

to be shockingly flirtatious when in truth they desire to be with boys only because they feel like boys and don't know how to get on with girls. Dr. Constance Long gives details of such a case. A nice-looking, well-grown girl of fourteen was brought to her because of a supposed mania for boys. She "picked them up" on her way to day-school and when she was sent to boarding-school she managed to make engagements with boys and escape from school to go roving with them. Dr. Long says of this girl: "The analysis of a single dream showed her confusion of sex. She *felt* a boy in most respects, she loved all their games and sports. . . . She showed no interest in boys as lovers, and was irritated and nonplused when a sentimental rivalry momentarily arose between two of them for a kiss. She loathed girls and called them sneaks. She declared she was always shocking them. It soon became clear that her love for boys was a longing for their companionship because she felt more at home with them. It was not a wish for flirtation. This once understood the problem had to be differently met."

The rebellion of the adolescent girl at her

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femininity is termed by Adler "the masculine protest." In some cases this protest becomes the guiding motive of her conduct through the rest of life.

There might be very little nervous tension if the adolescent problem were merely that the average girl, who up to twelve had imagined herself capable of emulating great men, finds in her early teens that she must adjust herself to ideals more compatible with her womanhood. The fact is that no sooner does she realize the physical limitations of her sex than new impulses entirely foreign to her previous experience flood her soul and propel her into the midst of the hardest emotional conflict.

To understand the two competing impulses in this adolescent conflict we must remember the two basic human impulses are self-preservation and reproduction, or racial preservation. The egocentric or self-regarding impulses based on the instinct of self-preservation are uppermost in both girls and boys up to about twelve years of age. These impulses have found expression from time immemorial in the struggle for existence that has been the continuous history of every surviving species. The

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self-regarding impulses are thus a racial inheritance rooted in our unconscious minds whose impulses are always wholly selfish. At adolescence the selfish instincts of the savage stage are reinforced through youth's natural ambitions, and take shape as the will to power that is an inherent part of every normal individual. But at adolescence with the dawning of the parental instinct there are also born new, altruistic desires. The adolescent conflict is the bitter struggle between these new-born altruistic impulses and the old self-regarding instincts. In girls the conflict is fiercer than in boys because the altruistic impulses come to life in stronger form. Because of their function to bear and rear children, the sexual and parental instincts of women have from the remotest ages been irrevocably connected with the altruistic instincts of love, self-sacrifice and tenderness. So today a girl's primitive biological inheritance from the remote past of the race contains in great degree the altruistic instinct for sacrifice of self to the unborn generation. Her emotional urge is strong towards the expression of this instinct. In more primitive ages the altruistic instincts of the adoles-



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cent girl normally found expression as soon as they came into existence in early marriage and motherhood, just as they do today in the few primitive peoples that now survive. The more complicated social structure of civilized countries has postponed marriage and given the adolescent girl the possibility of using her life in other ways. The whole social mechanism today tends to repress into the unconsciousness her racial inheritance of desire for self-sacrifice. Since this is repressed, her self-regarding instincts come more powerfully to the fore as the will to power. In girls today the unceasing conflict between the will to power and the self-sacrificing instinct frequently expresses itself in conflicting desires for a family and a career. Boys can easily dream of both at the same time. I remember a boy of thirteen who told me he was going to be an army officer on the plains near the Mexican border, and have all sorts of adventures fighting Indians and Mexicans. I asked him if he wouldn't be rather lonely on the plains between adventures. "Oh, no," he assured me confidently. "By that time I shall have a wife and a numerous progeny with me."

In the dreams of the adolescent girl the ad-



ventures and the family are incompatible. If she tries to satisfy her will to power through a career she must starve her natural self-sacrificing instinct. On the other hand if she marries and has children her craving for self-assertion may be unsatisfied. The adolescent girl dreams of both courses and can never quite decide where her place will really be. It may seem strange that dreams of the future affect the emotional poise of girls in the teens, when in many cases no necessity of deciding the problem of their future will arise for several years at least. Yet the new psychology has fully shown that the ability to dream day dreams is the very core of every individual's emotional energy. All of us, and most of all adolescents, live not so much in the thought of what we are doing today or this year, as in what we can imagine ourselves doing at some future time. Recent psychological studies have made very plain that the greater part of the young girl's thoughts is taken up with day-dreams, phantasies in which she tries to picture her future.

The possibility of a future that will gratify either one of her two conflicting instincts presents itself to the girl of today more strongly

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than to any preceding generation. Formerly the only choices open to the average girl were to marry or to stay at home under her parents' domination. Usually she acquired some slight power by marrying and being the head of her household, while at the same time she satisfied her craving for self-sacrifice. Yet her position as wife and mother gave her small chance for self-assertion, and much nervous tension resulted from the repression of her will to power. Today there is a growing danger that the adolescent girl will lose nervous poise through suppressing the other competitor in the struggle, the primitive urge to giving of self. While this instinct is frequently suppressed into the unconsciousness it struggles there all the more fiercely.

It is plain that the adolescent conflict in the young girl is conditioned by her sex. Accordingly her nervous tension is greatly decreased, the danger of loss of mental balance is greatly lessened if a girl has been brought to face the problems of her sex frankly. To do so she must have proper education in the physical facts of reproduction, and sympathetic help in reaching a sane view of what her emotional

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reaction to ideas of sex should normally be.

The young girl who does not learn even the physiology of sex until she is in her teens usually makes up phantastic explanations, puzzling and worrying over the subject so much that it consumes an unnecessarily great part of her thought. She lives too much in a phantasy that paralyzes her actions and tends towards neuroticism. Dr. Phyllis Blanchard stresses the immense significance of unsatisfied sexual curiosity or improper enlightenment as a factor in the adolescent conflict that tears the oversensitive soul. Through her ignorance a young girl may turn with horror from the thought of any future that contains wifehood and motherhood. What information she possesses has frequently been gathered from sources that give to the whole subject of sex a harmful mixture of attraction and abhorrence. Every girl has some natural feeling of abhorrence or fear, because the problem of sex is for women inseparable from the travail of childbearing. As Dr. Blanchard says, this not unnatural fear of motherhood is too often unnecessarily increased in a girl by the way in which she has learned the facts of sex. Frequently she has

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supplemented what scanty information she could gather by surreptitious reading in medical books and dictionaries where the diseased aspects are naturally emphasized and where anatomical cuts and diagrams fill her impressionable soul with aversion. In other cases she has been talked to by someone who has stressed the suffering involved or has even represented woman as always the helpless sufferer at the hands of the brutal male. She has gathered the erroneous idea that man uses woman merely to satisfy his passions, at the same time refusing her freedom for individual development.

The diary of a young girl of noble family in Vienna illustrates this not uncommon mixture of abhorrence and attraction which the naturally secretive young girl never expresses, openly. "If it's really as Dora says, then she is right when she says it is better not to marry. One can fall in love, one must fall in love, but one can just break off the engagement. Well, that's the best way out of the difficulty, for then no one can say that you've never had a man in love with you." And again, "There is no reason to be frightened, one simply need not marry."

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It is easily seen that it is of the utmost importance to a girl's nervous poise that she should be given a straight-forward explanation of the physiology of child-bearing before the age of ten, when no emotional attitude on her part will complicate the assimilation of the knowledge. Later when emotion tinges the girl's thoughts on the subject she will have a background of real understanding. She will not waste or misdirect a great part of her emotional energy through unnecessary abhorrence or through repressed curiosity for which the only outlet is the weaving of fanciful explanations.

The tension involved in the adolescent conflict is further decreased if in addition to being given an explanation of the physiology of reproduction a girl is brought up to a sane view of what her emotional reaction to ideas of sex should normally be. It is hard for many girls to face problems of their sex frankly for they have been made to feel that no such problems should exist for them. The more carefully a girl has been brought up the more she has been instilled with the idea that all sexual emotion is unwomanly, all feelings of passion incom-

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patible with a true refinement of nature. The average girl has been given as the ideal towards which she should strive that abnormal absence of sexual feeling which psychiatrists call sexual anaesthesia. Dr. Blanchard quotes a girl who has been brought up in this way and says, "I know now that I am the passionate type; and I used to think I was very bad to be so and bound straight for Hell. Lately I have come to understand that it is natural for women to have sexual feelings and my mind is more at ease, but for a long time I thought I was really as bad as the nuns said."

The girl even more than the boy needs help in developing a sane outlook on sex problems early, because without it she will not realize how much of her conduct is prompted by sexual motives, she will not know that the normal sexual urge to self-sacrifice is at work in her and calling her to solve her adolescent conflict in a way that gives it outlet. A boy's feelings are more centralized. He can more easily recognize that feelings of sex prompt many of his actions. The girl's feelings are more diffused and less comprehensible to her. She needs help in realizing the new force that is burgeoning in



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her, that makes her seek to be the center of attraction. Ignorance of this force makes her express her new-born energy at times even more crudely than boys do. When she giggles and minces and laughs loudly, when she seeks to extend her personality and reinforce her stinging sense of self-consciousness by decking herself with gaudy attire, she has little or no comprehension that there is a sexual motive back of her conduct. Naturally in her ignorance that this motive is at work in her she more readily turns to solving her adolescent conflict by choosing a career, with no thought of the altruistic instinct that for women is irrevocably bound up with the sexual impulses.

So we have the picture of the average adolescent girl who lives largely in phantasy, whose emotional tension is conditioned more by the thought of her possible future than of her actual present. How is she to solve her adolescent conflict? What is she to do with her new-found energy?

It is on this important point that the teachings of the new psychology have been most harmfully misrepresented. The adolescent conflict has been popularly depicted as a struggle



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between the sexual desires and the repressions of the modern social structure. Repression has been represented as harmful to youth of either sex. The new freedom of the modern girl has been represented to include sexual freedom. Her masculine protest asserts itself, according to this belief, in abolishing the double standard of morals, not through holding men to a single standard, but by allowing women the freedom formerly accorded only to men. There results a growing tendency to feel with Owen Johnson's *Salamander* that "where men may taste women may explore." The idea that such a course is the teaching of the new psychology is absolutely false.

Freud, whose name has so often been mistakenly invoked as an advocate of doing away with repressions, makes clear that repressions are dangerous to mental health only when they are thrust down into the unconsciousness. When by means of psychoanalysis such suppressions are recalled to the consciousness, when the two competitors in the conflict are frankly faced nervous symptoms tend to disappear. In other words no *conscious* repression need be done away with to secure mental

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poise. We must simply strive to have emotional conflicts well under the control of the conscious mental life. So we see that, rather than advocating the doing away with conscious repressions of civilized ethical codes, the new psychology preaches a frank understanding of the instincts that are to be held in control, a conscious facing of both competing instincts in the adolescent conflict. Moreover the new psychology recognizes the danger of suppressing into the unconscious ideals of controlled conduct that have been slowly and painfully evolved from the days of the earliest sexual taboos to the highest codes of modern times. The new psychology makes plain that to suppress all such ideals and give license for free love is particularly fatal to the nervous poise of the adolescent girl. For such a course runs absolutely counter to the altruistic instinct that is an inseparable part of her racial inheritance. Any life of sexual satisfaction that runs counter to this basic altruistic instinct is bound to result in mental upheaval, and is usually only possible to individuals who are born mentally inferior. The case histories of psychoanalysts show many instances where lack of control in

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conduct led to mental upheaval in young girls. The grave physical dangers and loss of social efficiency involved in such a course are self-evident. Without considering these phases that are outside its own sphere, the new psychology shows that the mere doing away with suppressions does not solve the adolescent conflict. What then should be the solution of the problem that rasps the adolescent nerves? The new psychology points to using the new sexual energy not through license but through sublimation. It is the only solution of the conflict which gives satisfaction to both the competing instincts.

At adolescence when the fire of sex burns high it flows easily into many pathways of expression. Whether the conversion of a girl's emotional energy shall be upwards or downwards depends upon several things. We have already seen it is conditioned by the influence of her home life, particularly by the way she has acquired sexual knowledge. Sublimation, the converting upwards of the sexual energy also depends upon the channels of self-expression open to a girl.

From remote ages the race has sublimated

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its emotional energy in evolving and perfecting the arts of dance, song, poetry, and picture making. While some of the arts may have originated as stimuli to sexual orgies they have gradually become substitutes for direct sexual expression. Through the ages these arts have raised people above the plane of everyday living, and made them temporarily forget their own impotencies and inferiorities. The first evidences we have of the beginning of the arts are crude pictures made on walls of caves in Southern France by Cro-Magnon men, who lived from twenty thousand to fifteen thousand years before the Christian era. Through the centuries from those distant times the arts have gradually become normal neural pathways of the race in the sublimation of sexual energy.

The love of the arts is particularly strong at adolescence. To divert the new-found energy of adolescent girls into such congenial channels is easy and natural, particularly if some training in the rudiments of the arts has been given before adolescence. If at adolescence a girl can accomplish something besides mere drill in the first technicalities, if she is proficient enough in the practice of any art to

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give pleasure to others, she will have a means of giving satisfaction to both of the instincts that are struggling in her soul. She will have an outlet both for the will to power and the altruistic instinct. She will attain an inner feeling of strength and force that will sweep away her sense of inferiority and give immense satisfaction. Even if her performances are not good enough to give pleasure to others, they frequently fill a great need of the girl herself. If she enjoys them she should not be discouraged from her attempts, painful though they may be to auditors and beholders. For generations some proficiency in the arts has been considered a pretty accomplishment for girls. Parents who could afford to give their daughters instruction in music, drawing or dancing did so merely to give the girls an attractive "finish." Today the vast importance of such training to the girl's emotional life is better understood. School methods are now being adopted that make some training in the arts available to every girl at every economic level and of every degree of talent.

Another avenue of sublimation open to girls of today during later adolescence is in teaching

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and social work of various kinds. When constructive work is done along such lines the will to power finds satisfaction and through service to others the altruistic instinct also has outlet. Frequently there is a religious motive in taking up such work, for the adolescent girl is particularly responsive to religious influences. As Dr. Blanchard says, girls much less than boys realize that "their vague longings and aspirations have anything even remotely sexual in their composition and turn so much the more readily to the emotional outlets of religion and art as a means of satisfaction."

For the sublimation that ideally solves the adolescent problem of the girl, both parents and teachers have great responsibility. In most cases it is the nature of the girl's environment, of the opportunities open to her that determines whether the conversion of her sexual energy shall be upward or downward. For the task of aiding sublimation it is necessary that parents and teachers shall themselves have a sane philosophy of sex. Dr. Josephine Kenyon is wont to point out in her lectures on sex education, that no mother or teacher can help a girl to a sane viewpoint unless she has one her-



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self. If a mother really believes that part of her own instincts is base and unworthy she cannot help her daughter to face problems of sex frankly without shame. If a teacher does not understand the basis of adolescent peculiarities and the source of new adolescent energies she cannot hope to turn them into the paths she wishes them to take. If she does not realize the important part day-dreams of her future play in the young girl's life, she will not know how to turn that great fund of energy—the ability to dream—into those paths that have long made for the emotional stability of the individual and the good of society.

Parents and teachers have to realize that at adolescence the time for drill is over, the time for emotional expression has come. It is easy to see that the routine of factory or shop work is particularly cramping for girls who enter it in their teens. Yet school and college work may be made just as cramping if its function for the adolescent girl is not understood. Vocational work may be uselessly emphasized, for unless the emotions are satisfied by a vocation, no amount of technical training will make good workers.



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There should be a vitalization of studies that are too often made a mere memory drill. Ideally speaking, the adolescent period should give all manner of emotional outlets, should try out many paths of sublimation, so that each girl can find and later follow the one that suits her best. Dr. Blanchard points out how each subject in school work can be made an emotional outlet. Literature can give vicarious satisfaction through letting a girl live out the emotions of the heroes and heroines, enjoying and suffering all things through them. History can be made a thrilling story of the accomplishments of the race rather than merely a dry collection of facts and dates. Rudiments of some modern language should have been acquired before now, so that at adolescence a girl can enter into the spirit of foreign authors, understand the temperament of other races and feel the color of far-away countries. The study of natural sciences should reinforce the love of nature that is inherent in adolescents. Games and athletics instead of being merely so much exercise, can be made into contests as vivid as in Olympic days. Similarly folk-dances should be understood as giving a means of entering into the

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life and spirit of the times in which they originated. Thus an ideal school régime can make daily life more vivid than dreams or phantasies. The adolescent girl is especially fortunate who has all these emotional outlets, and from them chooses some one form of creative self-expression that she can make her own for her whole life long.

Marriage and motherhood are the normal expressions of the self-sacrificing instincts that are an inherent part of woman's makeup. Happy is the girl who looks forward to this normal outlet of her sexual and parental instincts, with an added equipment of some form of creative work that satisfies her will to power. She may often wish to lay that work aside when her children are young, to take it up again when they are older. Yet even while her ability lies unused, the knowledge of its possession aids her emotional poise.

The magnificent heritage which the adolescent girl comes into today has been within her grasp for such a short while that no one can confidently predict how much she will make of it. With balanced emotional poise how much can a woman accomplish in the form of a career

## *Giving Your Child the Best Chance*

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while at the same time she follows her altruistic instinct by marrying and having children? No one yet knows. Tansley rather pessimistically feels that no woman, however much she is helped by the power of money, can succeed in both family life and a career without severe psychic strain. But he admits that woman's opportunity is still too new for anyone to know positively what she can do with it. Only this much can the new psychology predict with authority. The adolescent girl will never attain all she is capable of if she tries to follow man-made paths, if she puts all her effort into satisfying her will to power. She must face the fact that her future is conditioned by her biological inheritance from the race. No future will give her emotional poise that does not satisfy her primitive urge for self-sacrifice as well as her will to power. Just how much women can accomplish through finding means to satisfy their two conflicting instincts lies within the proof of the adolescent girl of today. Their futures will be largely conditioned by the emotional poise with which they go through the adolescent crisis.





